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# **Working with Gekidan Kaitaisha: Addressing the Complexity of the Self of the Performer as Other**

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **Abstract**

This project focuses on performance-making practices for contemporary audiences and addresses the complexity of the self of the performer as other, drawing primarily on the author's collaborative practice with Japanese performance company Gekidan Kaitaisha. The investigation approaches the enquiry from a practitioner's perspective and addresses questions that emerge from that practice. The aim of this is to establish accounts of the self of the performer, performer expertise, collaborative performance processes and cultural hybridization. The project specifically transcribes the sensed and felt experience, and knowledge, of the expert practitioner. This offers insights into the complexity of the self of the performer as other, transcultural collaboration, and performance making. Through a qualitative research based inquiry, the project draws on a practice-centred approach, with the inquiry taking place through both practice as research and literature-based research, culminating in a written thesis and the DVD documentation of the rehearsal processes and performances from a range of collaborative projects.

The inquiry constructs a layered, multifaceted, and multi-linear map of performer-bodiness and performer-selfhood that operates within the compositional processes of performance-making, and draws out an 'actional self' in-process and constantly altered, composed, recomposed, and difficult to grasp as a singular static unchanging "thing" or quality. The investigation addresses post-colonial complexities through an understanding of the work of certain twentieth century writers and practitioners, in terms of a desire for difference, and addresses the complexity of the self of the performer as other in a culturally complex context. It locates 'otherness' in terms of identity within the framework of cultural distinctions, where the other might be perceived to be a site of desire. The practice reveals that something is being played out, in performance-making terms, that is much more complex, complicated, and ungraspable than the idea of the ambiguities of cultural distinctiveness.

## **Acknowledgements**

It would not have been possible to write this doctoral thesis without the help and support of the kind people around me, to only some of whom it is possible to give mention to here.

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For any errors, omissions, or inadequacies that may remain in this work, of course, the responsibility is entirely my own.

### **A Note on Names**

For Japanese names I have chosen the Japanese convention of using the last name first.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Practice as Research Documentation**

I include here a selection of images from the practice-as-research, which forms the central part of this project. The reader is encouraged to access documentation of the practice at key moments throughout their engagement with the written thesis, via the accompanying CD-ROM's (Documentation of Practice, Disc One and Disc Two), and there will be indications of when to do so within the text.

## **Documentation of Practice, Disc One and Disc Two**

Gekidan Kaitaisha: *With Eternal Revolution*, Free Space Canvas, Tokyo (July – August 2010)



Figure 1: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Aota Reiko and Hino Hiruko, photo Miyauchi Katsu.





Figure 2: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Jonathan Giles Garner, Kumamoto Kenjiro, Sugiura Chizuko, and Ishi Yasuji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 3: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Ishi Yasuji, Hino Hiruko, and Aota Reiko, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.



Figure 4: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Ishi Yasuji, Jonathan Giles Garner, and Kumamoto Kenjiro, photo Miyauchi Katsu.





Figure 5: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Aota Reiko and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 6: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.





Figure 7: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Honma Ryoji, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, and Kumamoto Kenjiro, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 8: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Hino Hiruko and Aota Reiko, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

**Gekidan Kaitaisha: *Dream Regime – Faithful Bodies and Era of the Sick*, Morishita Studio, Tokyo (January –February 2011)**



Figure 9: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies Part One* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Nakajima Miyuki, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, and Mikiyoung Jun Pearce, photo Miyauchi Katsu.





Figure 10: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies Part One* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Jonathan Giles Garner, Kumamoto Kenjiro, Nakajima Miyuki, Ishi Yasuji, Ito Daisuke, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 11: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies Part One* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Nakajima Miyuki and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 12: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies Part One* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Sugiura Chizuko and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.





Figure 13: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in performance: Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Saito Koshiro, Mikyoung Jun Pearce, Sasaki Katsumi, and Matt Beere, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

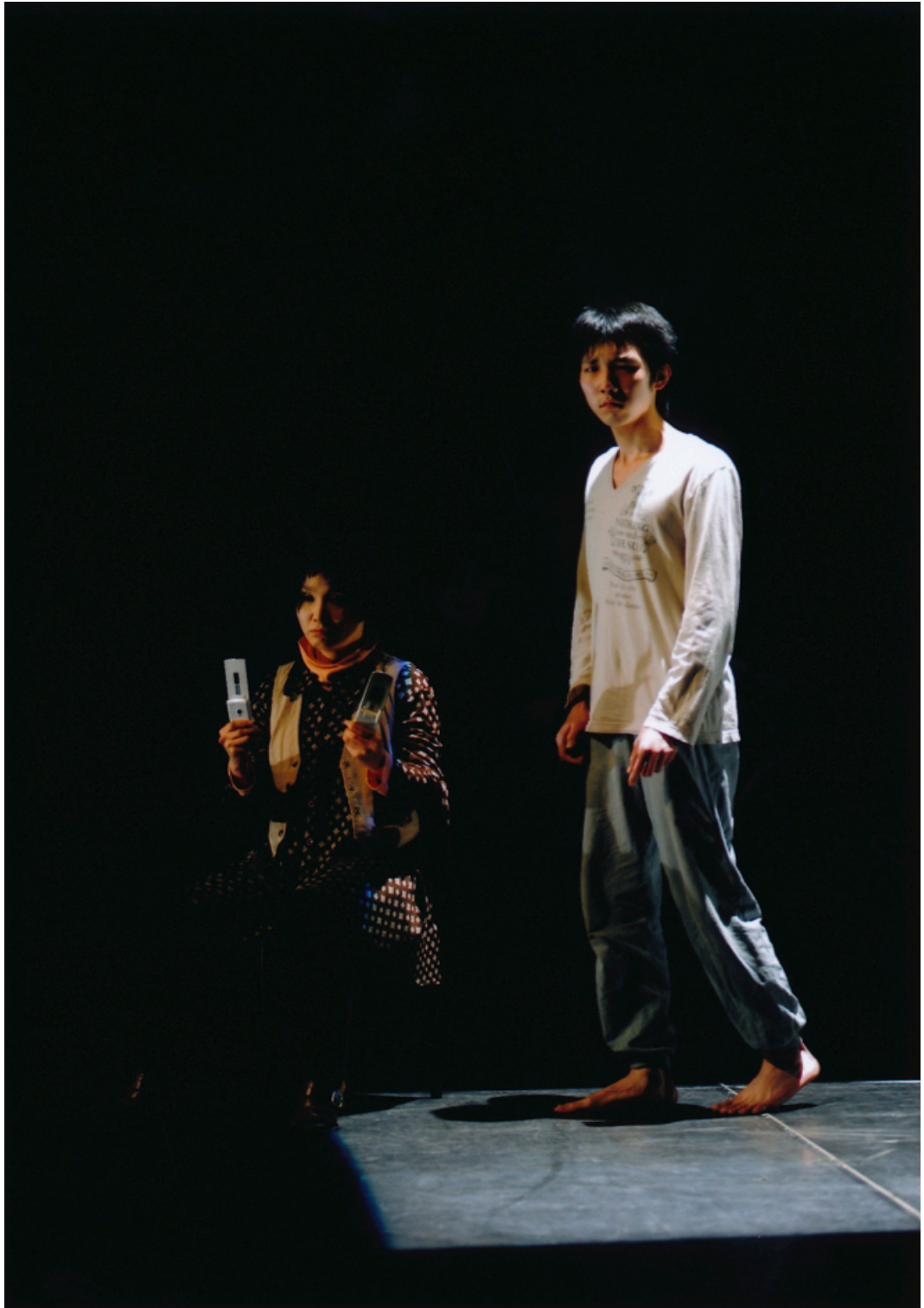


Figure 14: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in performance: Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 15: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in performance: Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Kumamoto Kenjiro, Nakajima Miyuki, Aleksandra Sliwińska, Hino Hiruko, Katarzyna Pastuszek, and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.





Figures 16: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies Part One* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Sugiura Chizuko and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

*Jouissance System*, Free Space Canvas, Tokyo, (January – February, 2012)



Figure 17: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012. Left to right, Yabe Kumiko, Mikyoung Jun Pearce, and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



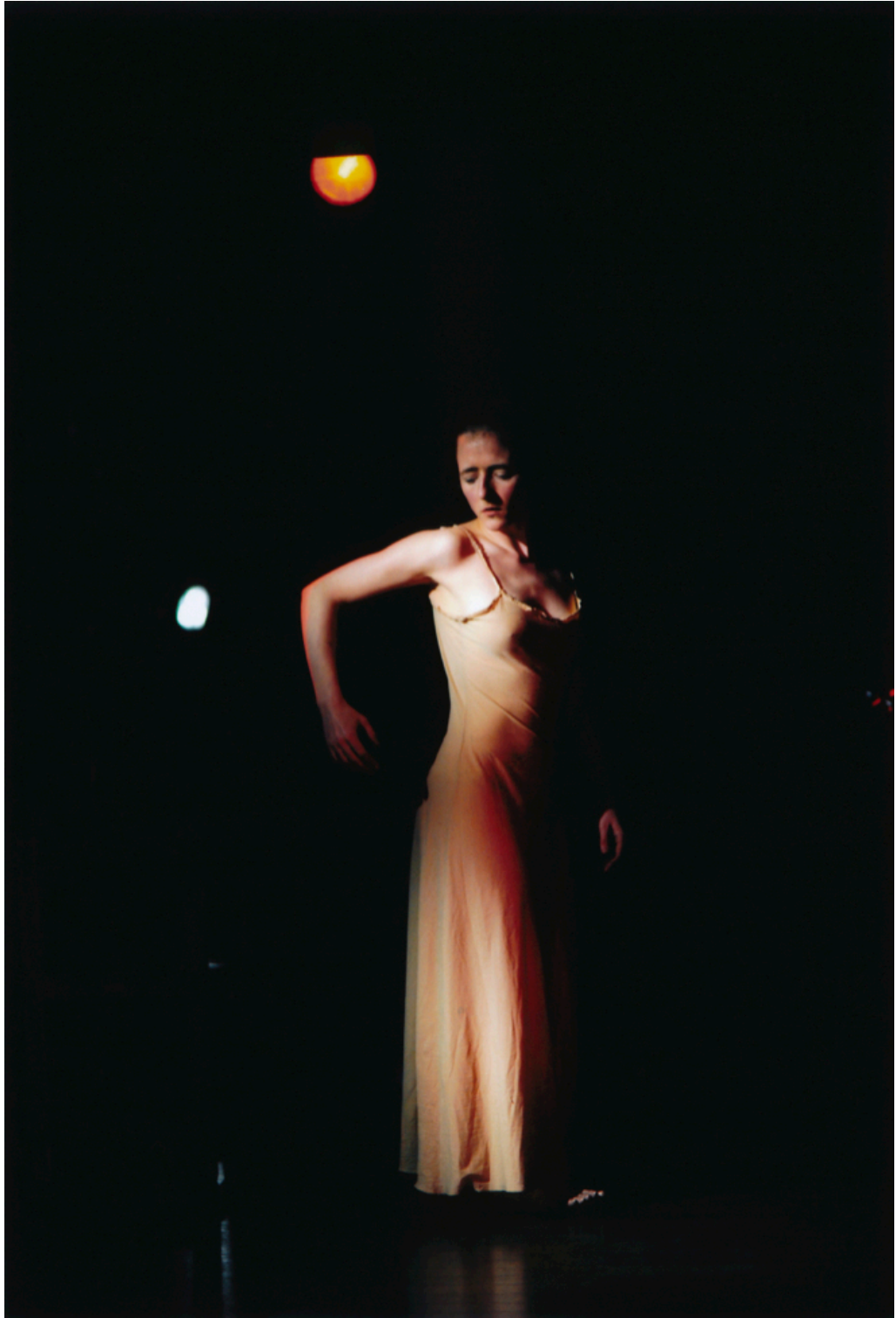


Figure 18: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 19: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



Figure 20: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012. Left to right, Yabe Kumiko, Aoki Yuhei, Mikyoung Jun Pearce, and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



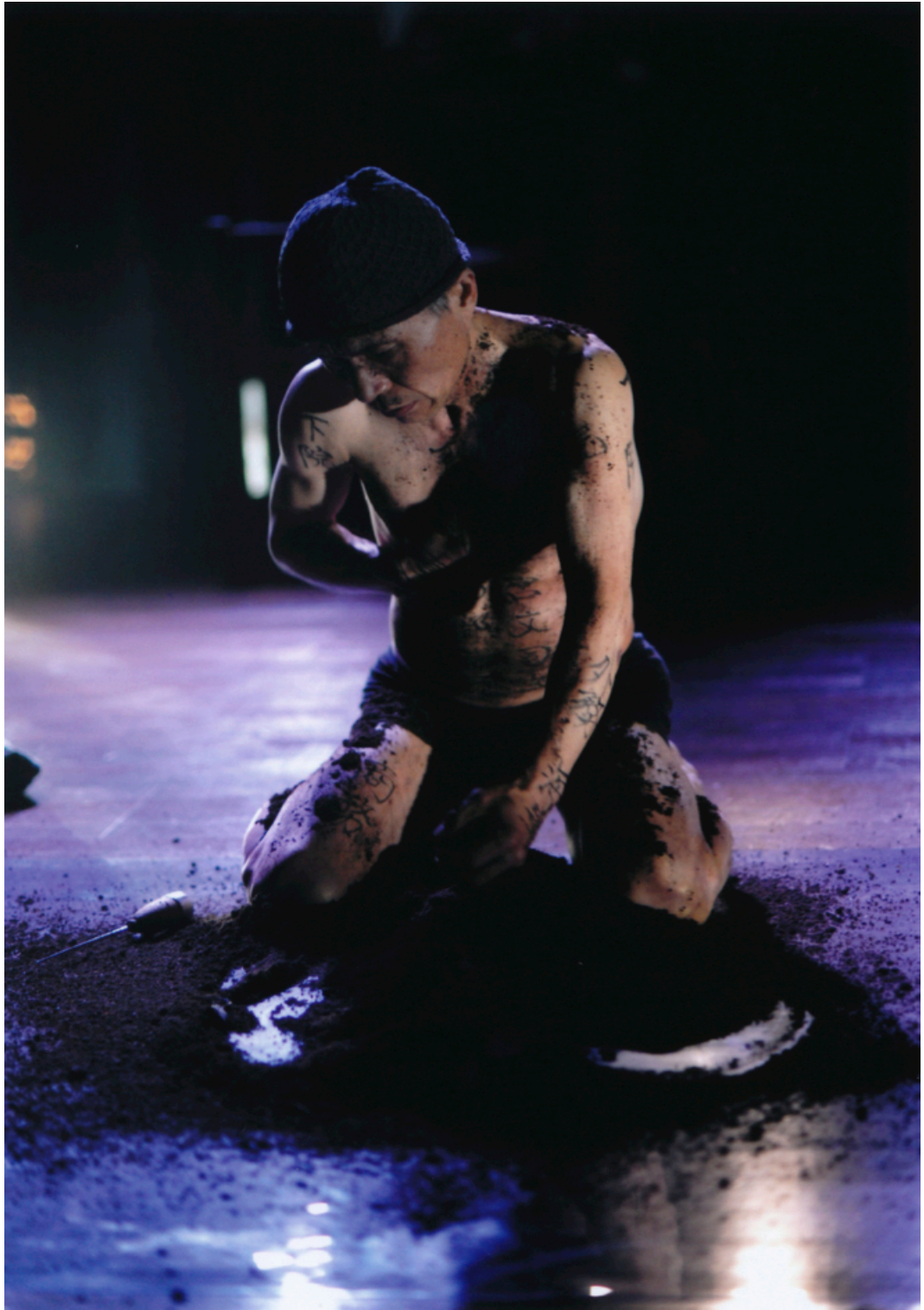


Figure 21: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012; Kumamoto Kenjiro, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

Memopia Theatre Project *Of the Sea*: (Swansea, April – May 2010)



Figure 22: *Of the Sea* in performance, Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, May 2010. Left to right, Joanne Harries and Chloe Freeman-Oakley, photo Emma-Louise Henson.



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Figure 24: *Of the Sea* in performance, Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, May 2010; the cast, photo Rob Mitchell.



**Studio-based collaborative Practice as Research with Noyale Colin, London, Wales, and France (2011 – 2012)**



Figure 25: PAF residency, France 2011; Noyale Colin, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.





Figure 26: PAF residency, France 2011; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Noyale Colin.

## **The Research Inquiry**

This PhD project is mixed-mode, based on performance practice as research and literature-based research. It brings together a number of modes of research enquiry, and proposes a range of complementary research outcomes. In structural terms, it involves a number of quasi-discrete phases, each of which is informed by a set of questions relating to cultural specificity, cultural diversity, and cultural hybridisation, and a focus on performance-making practices for contemporary audiences. I address the complexities of cultural, linguistic, and movement translation, in significant part from a first person, practitioner perspective, asking to what extent a researcher can effectively engage with her or his own practice; what discursive registers should be used to account for performance and other practices from the perspective of the performance ‘insider’; and how practices can be documented. Throughout the thesis, I invite the reader to view documentation of the performance practices that I have engaged with, which they can access through the accompanying CD-ROM’s (Documentation of Practice, Disc One and Disc Two). I also refer the reader to DVD documentation of Gekidan Kaitaisha performances (Performance Documentation, Discs One – Five).

Drawing on Baruch Spinoza’s 17<sup>th</sup> century account of the body, Gilles Deleuze states that:

A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. We call longitude of a body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between unformed elements. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is, the intensive states of anonymous force ... In this way we construct a map of the body. The longitudes and the latitudes together constitute Nature, the plane of immanence or consistency, which is always variable and is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed, by individuals and collectives. (Deleuze, 1988b: 127-8)

I reference Deleuze’s description of the body throughout the thesis, drawing on the metaphors of longitude and latitude to which he refers. I propose to argue, and to demonstrate in what follows, that Deleuze’s notion of the longitude of the body, the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest – or the unformed moments – relate to performance-making, where the performer operates within a choreographic framework that is improvised, rather than pre-given. I draw on his other notion of the

latitude of the body, the set of affects that occupy a body – and in relation to other bodies - at each moment, viewing them from the performer perspective, and from the perspective of performance-making, in particular focussing on spatial and geographical contexts. In reference to such an account of the body's potential, this inquiry constructs a map of the performing body, through drawing on the documentation of body-work in performance to form traces of the concrete, and of what I propose to call – from the practitioner perspective - the 'actional self', that is constantly altered, composed, and recomposed by individuals and collectives as it operates in collaborative performance making. I propose that within the enquiry, in actional terms, my self is both one *and* its other. This notion is key to my research enquiry as I position myself as an 'overlap' in relation to Kaitaisha's practice, which enables me to communicate insights into their practice and into the matter of a performer engaging in relational dynamics in collaboration. Within the practice I am therefore simultaneously operating as a practitioner, immersed in the practice, and an observer, and this duality within the practice-as-research creates a duality within the self. I discuss the complexity of what it means to observe a practice that you are immersed in in relation to my research approaches later in this introduction.

I refer throughout the inquiry to the 'body' and the 'self', and through doing so I make clear distinctions between my uses of the terms. As I expand upon in Chapter Four, even discussing 'the body' - as many in performance seem so readily to do - is a complex matter, and I will favour, instead, the term 'bodyness' as a quality of human being and action. The use of the term 'the body' in dance and performance theory is generalising and problematic, however, as it has clear currency in much performance writing, I shall continue to use it. I argue that dance and performance theory's accounts of the body raise broader philosophical questions relating to how the self of the performer can be understood, and I address the complexity of this 'self' throughout my inquiry.

This research inquiry draws specifically on my collaborative work with Japanese theatre company Gekidan Kaitaisha, and it addresses the complexity of the self of the performer as other<sup>1</sup> in a culturally complex context. I locate 'otherness' in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> The Other is a key concept in continental philosophy that has been introduced and adopted by a range of philosophers, such as Georg W. F. Hegel in the nineteenth century, and in the

identity within the framework of cultural distinctions, where the other – recalling the Lacanian tradition, in particular the four major concepts on which Jacques Lacan based psychoanalysis: the unconscious, repetition, transference and drive (Lacan, 1977), and its offshoots (Said, 2003/1978) - might be perceived to be a site of desire. Lacan referred to the Other as the fields of inter-subjective interactions where an individual measures themselves in relation to broad cultural orders or ideas of anonymous authoritative power and knowledge, hence, in Lacan's terms, the self is always in the field of the Other (Johnston, 2013). I draw on 'otherness' in a philosophical sense, where one might be transformed by the other; in a psychological sense, where a 'decentred' self might be experienced, in part, as fragmentary, embedded in/embedded by the other (Gerson, 2010)<sup>2</sup>; and in a compositional sense where work is put together such as to enact, in Deleuze's terms above, a set of dynamically-changing relations between self and the other that operate on Deleuze's plane of consistency. The notion of distancing from self or objectifying self is found in a range of twentieth century writers including Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, 1962), for whom such distancing eventually allows a thematisation of the self (as other). In terms of 'otherness', as we find it in a number of individuals writing in the twentieth century, including Edward Said (Said, 2003), who proposed that imperial western societies 'othered' people (in the 'Orient') who they wished to control (Said, 2003), the notion of 'otherness' is of interest in performance-compositional as well as psychological and intercultural terms. Processes

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twentieth century Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Lévinas, and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Hegel introduced the notion of the other as a constituent of self-consciousness, and Husserl used the notion of the other as the basis for intersubjectivity. Sartre's use of the concept regards the Other as an object in one's world, where there is a non-negotiable distinction between self and Otherness (Busch, 1999). Lévinas attempted to address the problematic of ontology through investigating the face-to-face relation with the Other, where the Other puts 'me' in question. For Lévinas the Other is not known, but challenges the complacency of the self through desire, language, and the concern for justice. Lévinas proposed that the encounter with the Other does not have an empirical basis as an event or non-event in linear time, nor is there a 'self' that exists a priori to the encounter which may choose to avoid the traumatic experience of alterity; the encounter is an originary and essential moment through which the self comes into being (Perpich, 1999). Lacan associated the Other with the symbolic order, and distinguished the Otherness of language and culture (the big Other) from the otherness of other people. Lacan's big Other exists outside us, and we necessarily borrow our terms from the Other. In this relationship with the Other we are subjects that are made capable of signifying (Belsey, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> As I discuss in detail in Chapter Four, in *The Embedded Self* (2010) Mary-Joan Gerson examines the de-centred self in terms of intersubjectivity. Gerson proposes that the individual is to an extent prompted, shaped and influenced by their partner, and thus de-centred.

of engagement, action and reflexivity in performance practices can mean that the performer's sense of self is made manifest and drawn away from the self and towards the other, and is modified through this process. This 'pulling' can be seen as an attraction or, in everyday readings of Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, a desire towards that which is perceived to be other to self, and thus entailing/effecting a desire towards self-transformation (Lacan, 2006). I propose to demonstrate, in what follows, that this sense of the complex, dynamic, and internally-contradictory self is engaged quite particularly in my work with Kaitaisha. In what follows, I draw extensively on philosophically positioned theories of subject and self in order to position the temporally and spatially located self as a heterogeneous multiplicity, where the unfolding, creative, or active character of being is dynamic, in flux, possibly in a curious relationship with others' perceptions of the performer as a material being, and difficult to grasp as a singular concrete static unchanging "thing" or quality. This inquiry draws extensively on my work (and self) in practice within Kaitaisha collaborations, and I attempt in addition to account for my experience of these practices through written enquiry and documentation.

The research undertaking acknowledges from the outset the peculiarities and complexities of my researcher-self, as a European performer, observing and collaborating with an 'Asian' company and performer body<sup>3</sup>. The present study involves an insider/outsider practitioner account, from this particular perspective. Because of its location in a Western context at a particular historical moment (early twenty first-century), the project addresses the post-colonial complexities of my position, and once again from this perspective, I both consider questions of opposition and hierarchy in terms of the Eastern and the Western - that I effortlessly and irresistibly embody as well as work within - and I attempt in so doing to deconstruct these sorts of problematic definitions. I discuss the background work of twentieth century writers and practitioners such as Eugenio Barba, Antonin Artaud, and Roland Barthes; their 'textualisations' (and imaginings) of the Asian 'other' can still be read (and arguably are, within the university at least) in terms of a still unresolved desire for difference, for, in Said's terms, the Oriental (Said, 2003), hence a desire for the 'other' (that is, by

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<sup>3</sup>I refer to the Gekidan Kaitaisha performer body here in the sense of regarding it as potentially physiologically and culturally 'other' to my own body.

definition, and in parts at least, the ‘not-I’). I am arguing here that, to some extent, my choice of collaborators embodies that desire for the other.

In other words, within such a historical contextualisation, from the perspective of my work with Kaitaisha and within the framework of the present inquiry, I unavoidably perform the role of a ‘Westerner’ who cannot avoid consideration of my own desire for the ‘other’, or for otherness within the dynamic self I have briefly outlined above. I position my understanding of my training with Kaitaisha as post-Barba’s mimicry and incorporation of the other (as I discuss in some detail in Chapter One), and within Heidegger’s notion of a transformation of self which necessarily involves a certain violence (Milet, 1995): through my engagement with Kaitaisha, as I go on to discuss (page 60) my sense of self is of *becoming other* through an alteration which is not absorbed within my identity, but which articulates and directs and divides and splits, and creates a (or participates in an endlessly unfolding) transformation of self.

As I began this inquiry, I initially worked with the premise, in the context of my work with Kaitaisha and Japanese Butoh training, that I was engaged with a culturally-specific training and physicality (as Barba asserts in his writing - Barba & Savarese, 1991/2006), that allows the performer to ‘master’ her or his body in a specific way – through particular sorts of training. My interest lay in an attempt either to ‘translate’ such an approach, or at least to consider whether such a translation may be possible in my body and correspondingly in the bodies of those I teach, thereby expanding their repertoire as performers, if not addressing directly their sense of self. However, the practice as research that I initially engaged with revealed, in the contexts that I have been operating in, that something is being played out, in performance-making terms, that is much more complex, complicated, and ungraspable than the idea of the ambiguities of cultural distinctiveness. The resulting shift in the focus of my project was defined by my consideration of the layers of complexity that are in operation in the performance-making processes that I have been engaging with; specifically I was concerned with the notion of a distributed<sup>4</sup> self operating in the spatial/temporal

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<sup>4</sup> In Chapter Four I discuss the psychoanalytic Lacanian model of the ‘decentred’ self as being in significant part embedded in the other, drawing on clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst and therapist Mary-Joan Gerson’s *The Embedded Self* (2010), and her framing of the self in terms of intersubjectivity.

specifics of the performance space, and in questioning how I might be able to map such a body in the compositional processes of performance making. It became clear, in the practices that I was engaged with, that the complexity of the self of the performer as ‘other’ was being played out in multiple ways, and had been played out repeatedly throughout the twentieth century, albeit differently, and this concern thus became central to my project.

I would assert that this project offers an original contribution to knowledge in the field of performance in several respects. Firstly, in terms of my unique position as Kaitaisha company member, where I am able to account for their practice in detail, whilst moving across my roles as performer-researcher; this engages with a complex mode of active observation that allows the emotional, cognitive, symbolic, imaginative and sensorial involved in creative decision-making to enter the account. As I discuss in Chapter One, I draw here on Gregory Ulmer’s account of this complex mode of active observation, as outlined in his *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention* (1994). Secondly, in terms of my engagement with first-person performance writing accounts, which illuminate particular performer experiences as, arguably and in certain senses, representative experiences. Thirdly, in positioning myself as the ‘overlap’ in terms of my engagement with Kaitaisha’s practice (my ‘self’, in actional terms, is both one and its other) this allows me to attempt to communicate unique insights into their practice, and into the matter of a performer engaging in relational dynamics in collaboration. These together, I argue in what follows, permit me to offer a detailed analysis of the complexities of the self of the performer as other, driven, throughout, by desire (as I have outlined the term above).

#### **i. *Shôgekijô* and Gekidan Kaitaisha (Theatre of Deconstruction)**

Since the Meiji Period (1868 – 1912), Japanese theatre has been influenced by the rapid modernisation and Westernisation affecting Japanese society. *Shinpa* (New School) developed as a reaction to *Kabuki* theatre, and *Shingeki* (New Drama, or Western-style theatre) appeared as a reaction to *Shinpa* and *Kabuki* theatre (Tajima, 2008). *Shingeki* was a Japanese form of western naturalism, particularly drawn from Russian naturalism. In the 1960s *Shôgekijô* (Small Theatre, or Underground Theatre Movement) was developed, alongside *butoh*, by young actors who were dissatisfied with the existing

theatre of *Shingeki*, and by leaders of student theatre clubs who were seeking their own forms of expression within the context of the student activist movement. The movement initially encompassed a range of theatre and performance artists who sought a new performance language; performances took place on the street, in tents, and in various indoor venues. *Shôgekijô* aimed to liberate itself from ‘western’ drama and mainstream social codes, and focussed on dreams and philosophical ideas rather than representation. In *Theatre in Japan: An Overview of Performing Arts and Artists* (2008) Tajima Tomoko traces *Shôgekijô*’s development; the movement has been divided into five generations. The first generation was characterised by its intellectual and experimental nature as an anti-establishment, anti-*Shingeki*, avant-garde movement, Suzuki Tadashi and Terayama Shuji were important first generation figures; the second generation (1970s) established a self-parodying comedic style; the third generation leaders emerged from University student theatre during the 1980s, and they introduced new plots and strongly individualistic performance styles; the fourth generation (1990s) saw many groups disbanding and the emphasis shift from the strange and unusual to the ‘Quiet Theatre’ of everyday settings (as characterised by playwright Hirata Oriza); the (current) fifth generation is influenced by their distinctive socio-economic background, as they are part of the ‘lost decade’ that emerged from the economic bubble coming to an end in the early 1990’s. Individuals of the ‘lost decade’ (people born between 1973 – 82) often cannot find permanent employment, and work part time whilst living with their parents; they also may become ‘*hikikomori*’ (people who have not left their home for more than 6 months). An example of a fifth generation company is *Chelfitsch*, formed in 1997 by writer and director Okada Toshiki. ‘Chelfitsch’ represents the baby-like disarticulation of the English word ‘selfish’ and it is meant to evoke the social and cultural characteristics of contemporary Japan. The company’s work has been connected to experiences of loss and fragmentation in Japan’s historical identity and its encounter with postmodern culture. *Chelfitsch* use super colloquial Japanese along with distorted idiosyncratic movements and gestures, this ‘choreographed fidgeting’ is a signature practice in the companies work.

Gekidan Kaitaisha (Theatre of Deconstruction) is a Tokyo-based *shôgekijô* directed by Shimizu Shinjin, and choreographed by Hino Hiruko; they formed in 1985 and have toured extensively worldwide. The company initially began experimenting with ensemble work that incorporated mise-en-scene into genres such as film, electronic



music, and object installations; they then began working in outdoor spaces, staging a mobile outdoor performance *The Drifting View* (1985) in various sites across Japan. In 1991 Kaitaisha created the indoor performance series *The Dog*, which toured in the USA. The 1991 Gulf War had an impact on Kaitaisha's work in terms of how Shimizu regarded and represented the body, as I discuss in Chapter Three, and the company began to develop work that can be described as a 'Theatre of the Body (*Shin-tai*)'. In 1995 Kaitaisha developed the performance series *Tokyo Ghetto*, which toured to Croatia, the UK, Germany and Korea; works that followed included *Zero Category*, and *De-control*. In 1999 Kaitaisha collaborated with Australian multi-media performance company NYID (Not Yet It's Difficult) to create *Journey to Confusion*, and in 2001 they created *Bye-Bye: The New Primitive*, which toured in Asia, Europe and the USA. The company went on to create *Bye-By Phantom* (2003), *Bye-Bye: Reflection* (2006), the international *Dream Regime* project (2004 onwards), and many other new works.<sup>5</sup>

Shimizu describes his work as staging the deconstructed body in relation to history and current global systems to create a 'Theatre of the Body', referencing theoretical writers including Jacques Derrida, Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Lacan, Artaud, and Giorgio Agamben. Kaitaisha's physical movement has multiple influences, including Hijikata Tatsumi's *Ankoku Butoh* (dance of darkness)<sup>6</sup>; the raw expressivity of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater, which often sees the human body under physical and emotional assault through the repetition of violent gestures; and by the contraction and release technique created by Martha Graham. At the time of writing Kaitaisha have a shifting membership of four male and four female performers, who range in age and experience; they have an open membership policy, and regularly work with both Japanese and non-Japanese guest performers. The performers use intense physicality, slow small gestures, stillness, repetition, vocals, choreographed physical contact, a range of historical and fictional texts, projected film, text, and images, subdued yet controlled lighting, and minimal props such as a table, a chair, a book, or a mirror. Costumes are drawn from their vast collection; a performer could wear anything from a traditional Korean dress (*hanbok*), a dirty military-style coat or trousers, a wig, a bandage wound around their head, or

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<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive Gekidan Kaitaisha performance history see [http://www.kaitaisha.com/pb/index\\_pb\\_eng.html](http://www.kaitaisha.com/pb/index_pb_eng.html)

<sup>6</sup> The avant-garde dance form *Ankoku Butoh* has influenced Kaitaisha's practice in part because choreographer-performer Hino was a student of one of the founders of butoh, Hijikata Tatsumi. I outline the theory and practice of *Ankoku Butoh* in detail on page 44.

simply underwear. In a performance in Kaitaisha's studio the audience may be positioned to either side of the performers, sitting close together on stalls or crossed-legged on the floor. A female performer might stand on a stall in the space, raising her right arm upwards from the fingertips so slowly that an onlooker, however focused and attentive, can barely notice the arm moving. Another female performer might stand sweating and motionless, speaking the names of Japanese emperors as a male performer repeatedly strikes her on the back: her words are thus punctuated by the sound of his hand hitting her bare flesh.

I initially worked with Kaitaisha through the *Dream Regime* project, which began at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff in 2004. The project was initiated as a collaborative investigation into hidden histories of cultural diversity and migration throughout the twentieth century, and the 'globalised body' in performance. Around 25 international multi-disciplinary artists and academics collaborated with Kaitaisha over a 3-week period to create a work-in-progress performance. The ongoing project led Kaitaisha to engage in a series of performances and residencies with artists in Europe, Jordan, Brazil, East Timor, and Japan. Following this initial collaboration with the company, I was invited to take part in a further *Dream Regime* collaboration, and our collaborative relationship has continued since, with collaborations in Wales (2004, 2008), Germany (2004), Poland (2007), and Tokyo (2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012); the collaborations have either been part of the *Dream Regime* project, or Kaitaisha productions, and they have usually involved month-long rehearsal periods.

Kaitaisha work with core signature practices, such as 'transformation', 'repetition', 'phantom pain', and 'nervous system'; these are developed over time by the company, and are based on a critical understanding of the body and the 'systems' or power structures that it might exist in, as I discuss in detail in Chapter Three. I have trained and gained a complex physical and philosophical understanding of these practices, and I proceed to discuss them in detail throughout this text.

Although the philosophy of Hijikata underpins much of Kaitaisha's approach to movement, it is important to note here that the company, as they adamantly assert, are not a 'butoh' company. Their work diverges from that of many butoh companies, as they create highly critical work that uses text, and is equally influenced by other dance practices and theatrical traditions. I draw on the notion of the 'butoh body' throughout

this written account; butoh was at its inception an avant-garde dance form, which emerged in 1950's/1960's post-WWII Japan. Its founders, Hijikata Tatsumi (1928 - 1986), and Ohno Kazuo (1906 – 2010), created the *Ankoku-Butoh* (dance of darkness) movement. In its current form, 'butoh' can describe a range of activities, techniques, and motivations for dance, or movement; there is no set style or notated technique. A diverse range of international companies and artists have adopted and adapted butoh and applied it to their practice in different ways. Such practice may or may not include – and is not limited to – working with the notion of the 'transformation' of the body; grotesque, playful or taboo imagery; bodies covered in white body paint; the slowed-down body; and stylised choreography. My initial understanding of butoh was gained from my engagement with Kaitaisha's practices, and since then I have trained with various butoh practitioners, such as Endo Tadashi, Frances Barbe, Kawamoto Yuko, Ohno Yoshito, and Kan Katsura in the context of workshops. My principal understanding of the form relates to Hijikata's approach to the dancing body, and I would suggest that my encounter relates more to a philosophy or approach to the performing body, as opposed to working with a specific technique. I do not consider myself a butoh dancer, but I am influenced by and draw upon some physical and philosophical aspects of the work in my practice<sup>7</sup>.

## ii. Practice as research projects

The research undertaken in this inquiry is located in the following research projects:

- i) Memopia Theatre Project *Of the Sea*: teaching performer training techniques and directing a devised production at Swansea Metropolitan University (Swansea, April – May 2010)

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<sup>7</sup> As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four, I am drawn to, and my practice is influenced by Hijikata's notion of transformation, which allows performers to 'transform' into particular internal images that they engage with. This notion of transformation is a key element of Kaitaisha's practice, as I go on to discuss in Chapter Four, and as illustrated by DVD excerpts 'Documentation of Practice, Disc One, The Last living trilogy: With Eternal Revolution 2010: 'Transformation as technique'' and 'Sea Dog', and 'Documentation of Practice, Disc One, Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies and Era of the Sick 2011: 'Carrying''.

The project took place over a 5-week period at Swansea Metropolitan University (SMU), which commissioned my colleague in Memopia Theatre (Cherry Franklin) and myself, to work with a group of final year undergraduate students, to create an original devised performance. The resulting production *Of the Sea* was performed at Townhill Theatre, Swansea, and Chapter Theatre, Cardiff<sup>8</sup>. The project involved focussing on teaching performer training techniques that are influenced and informed by my training in butoh, by Kaitaisha's training, and various other techniques that engage with a specific 'psychophysical' approach to training and performing the body.

In the context of the SMU project, the psychophysical approach that we used aimed to develop the performer's awareness of their body and to encourage an engagement with their senses and imagination, through a physical approach to performer training. Konstantin Stanislavski first used the term 'psychophysical' during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to '...describe an approach to Western acting focused equally on the actor's psychology and physicality applied to textually based character acting' (Zarrilli, 2009: 13). Stanislavski's psychophysical approach focused on the relationship between the mind and body, and encouraged the actor to draw on all their senses, their imagination, emotions and memory in order to develop their conscious awareness. Practitioners, including Michael Chekhov and Phillip Zarrilli, have developed Stanislavski's psychophysical approach in various ways. Zarrilli uses a psychophysical approach to awaken the actor's bodymind in performance (Zarrilli, 2009).

- ii) Phillip Zarrilli Workshop 'Making the Body All Eyes: Psychophysical Process through Asian Martial/Meditation Arts' (Llanarth, July 2010)

I attended a workshop led by Zarrilli to form an embodied understanding of his approach to, and use of, Asian martial/meditation arts in his 'psychophysical' performer training. In research terms, I focussed on Zarrilli's adoption and

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<sup>8</sup> I completed ethics release forms for this project and submitted them to Middlesex University and Swansea Metropolitan University. All participants signed a research participant consent form in which they agreed to take part in the research, and agreed to the inclusion of any photographic or video documentation in the publication of this PhD.

adaption of Asian martial/meditation arts to form his performer training approach, and on what this offers a performer undergoing such training. The beginner's intensive workshop took place over a 5-day period at Zarrilli's specifically designed Kalaripayattu studio at Tyn-y-Parc, Wales<sup>9</sup>.

- iii) Gekidan Kaitaisha *With Eternal Revolution* – participation in and observation of rehearsals and performances at Free Space Canvas, Tokyo (July – August 2010)

I collaborated with Kaitaisha on their production *With Eternal Revolution*; in this project, in research terms, I reflected on my role within Kaitaisha as insider/outsider, and on the trained/untrained body in their work, as I discuss in Chapter Three. I also addressed specific research questions to Shimizu (director) and Hino (choreographer) in relation to the company's work<sup>10</sup>.

- iv) Gekidan Kaitaisha *Dream Regime – Faithful Bodies and Era of the Sick* – participation in, and observation of, rehearsals and performances at Morishita Studio, Tokyo (January –February 2011)

I collaborated with Kaitaisha on their production *Dream Regime – Faithful Bodies and Era of the Sick*. Within this project, in research terms, I reflected on performance composition, cross-cultural complexity, and the reflective-practitioner operating within PaR. The project was part of the TAGTAS symposium on 'Theatre and Nation' and the international *Dream Regime* project; the project was complex, with 17 performers working in five languages, whilst drawing on previous work to form two performances (performed on alternate nights). In response to both the complexity of the project (and the demands it placed on me as a performer), and to the difficulties I had in negotiating dual roles of performer and researcher in the previous project with Kaitaisha, I engaged with the project primarily as a performer, hence allowing my research to be informed by my exclusive practitioner-engagement.

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<sup>9</sup> Phillip Zarrilli has given written consent for the inclusion of the research findings and video documentation from the workshop to be included in the publication of this PhD.

<sup>10</sup> A research participant consent form signed by Shimizu Shinjin on behalf of Kaitaisha members is included in the appendix.



- v) Studio-based collaborative Practice as Research with Noyale Colin, London, Wales, and France (2011 – 2012)

I took part in a studio-based collaboration with dance/performance maker and doctoral researcher Noyale Colin, which took place over regular studio-based sessions (April – December 2011), and two residencies (August 2011, PAF (Performing Arts Forum), France and January 2012, Aberystwyth Arts Centre). This collaborative work allowed us to explore mutual concerns regarding the processes of embodying our research, and specifically, the relationship between ‘self’ and bodies in motion. A central concern was how we could account for each other’s presence, and we addressed this through an exploration of the following notions: embodied memory; kinaesthetic performer relationships; the performer-self in relation to other performer bodies and the space itself; perception; time and duration; presence; transformation; potentiality; sensation; performer relationships in improvisational work; and feedback-loops in movement. We explored a number of ways of supporting and illuminating each other’s enquiry through experimenting with feedback techniques; using drawing, text, and movement responses, and through duet, structured improvisations based on sensation and memory stimuli. We created a series of exercises that lent us a framework in which to pursue our research questions through practice<sup>11</sup>.

- vi) Gekidan Kaitaisha *Jouissance System* - participation in and observation of rehearsals and performances at Free Space Canvas, Tokyo, (January – February, 2012)

I collaborated with Kaitaisha on their production *Jouissance System*. Within this project, in research terms, I focussed on the experience of practice itself; the implications of my presence on the process in terms of how I engender or initiate practice; and on individual performer creative decision-making and

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<sup>11</sup> An outcome of the collaboration with Colin was a co-authored article in which we reflect on our shared practice, entitled ‘Bodies in Motion: Working through Plurality’, (De)Parsing Bodies, Skepsi: *The Interdisciplinary Online Journal of European Thought and Theory in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume V, Issue 1, Autumn 2012, Canterbury : School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent, Online Publication.

directorial pressure. I documented Kaitaisha and Shimizu's performance-making system in detail as I experienced it, alongside my experience of Tokyo.

## **Research Approaches**

I define my research approach overall in terms of the autoethnographic, where I engage in the research primarily from my own experience, and relate my autobiographical reflexive account to a critical, cultural, philosophical, social, and political understanding of the practice. My inquiry engages with qualitative research approaches, which I understand, in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln's terms as:

... a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 3)

My research approach is one that engages in practice, in the moment, where, as Denzin and Lincoln assert, the choices as to which interpretive practices I employ are not necessarily set in advance, as I deploy whatever strategies, methods, or empirical methods are at hand. Denzin and Lincoln describe this use of multiple methods as reflecting '... an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We can know a thing only through its representations ...' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 5); such a strategy, in their terms, adds complexity to the enquiry. My project attempts to create "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) that account for the practice, yet represent both its complexity and the impossibility of representation. The term "thick description" was used by anthropologist Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Geertz, 1973) to define his own ethnographic method, where a thick description is used to describe both human behaviour and its context. The thick description therefore goes beyond factual information and contains detail, commentary and interpretation. Throughout the thesis, I acknowledge that my relationship with the project is one where both the research itself,

and my self, are in a state of sustained flux, having the potential to be transformed, in part at least, by the nature of the inquiry and its undertaking. Such a potential transformation can be understood in Vidich and Lyman's terms, where they locate qualitative research methods in their historical context in sociology and anthropology:

sociology and anthropology are disciplines that, born out of concerns to understand the "other", are nevertheless also committed to an understanding of the self. If, following the tenets of symbolic interactionism, we grant that the other can be understood only as part of a relationship with the self, we may suggest a different approach to ethnography and the use of qualitative methods, one that conceives of the observer as possessing a self-identity that by definition is re-created in its relationship with the observed – the other, whether in another culture or that of the observer. (Vidich & Lyman, 2000: 38)

Hence, in these sorts of terms, and as an immersed researcher-practitioner who strives nonetheless to thematise self-ness, I have the ongoing potential to be re-created, in part at least, through my relationship with Kaitaisha, and through other performance-practitioners that I engage in practice as research with throughout the period of this inquiry.

My research method draws additionally on Action Research, an approach made available through the development of qualitative research models, which I discuss in some detail in Chapter Two. In the *Handbook of Action Research* (2006) Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury doubt whether it is possible to provide one coherent history of action research, tracing the roots to sources such as the social experiments of Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, the contemporary critique of positivist science and scientism, or the practices of experiential learning and psychotherapy. However, within these diverse roots, the emphasis is on matters of *practice*, as an alternative and important focus, as opposed to written modes. The participatory nature of action research, the implicit focus on *action*, and the collaborative relationship between the researcher and the participant, where the emphasis is on '... doing "with" rather than doing "for"' (Greenwood and Levin, 2007: 1) lend themselves to my PaR projects, where my relationship with the individuals that I work with is predominately a collaborative one. Reason and Bradbury identify the five broadly shared features which characterise action research as: human flourishing, practical issues, emergent developmental form, knowledge-in-action and participation and democracy (Reason and Bradbury, 2006: 2), and they note that together these characteristics imply an *action turn* in research practice. Reason and

Bradbury state that ‘... a primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives’ (Ibid). Action research additionally has a wider purpose to ‘... contribute through this practical knowledge to the increased well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of human persons and communities, and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet ...’ (Ibid). This model is useful to my own research in its emphasis on working towards practical outcomes and on creating new forms of understanding, and new forms of knowing. The action research model emphasises the importance of participation and relationships in terms of *knowing*. Reason and Bradbury state, as they discuss the participative worldview in action research, that a multiplicity of ways of knowing ‘... starts from a relationship between self and other, through participation and intuition’ (Ibid: 9-10), and those relationships are based on sensitivity and attunement in the moment. This notion of attunement in the moment, through collaborative action, is an important part of my research model, which I have taken from action research, as I discuss further in Chapter Two.

My inquiry engages with qualitative research through a phenomenological approach, where, in practice as research terms, I am the perceiving subject. Phenomenology, as Woodruff Smith states, is the ‘... study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object’ (Woodruff Smith, 2013). Early twentieth century philosophers such as Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty draw on a phenomenological approach. Merleau-Ponty argued for the primacy of perception, where the first site of knowing and perceiving the world is the body, and where that which is perceived cannot therefore be separated from the body (Flynn, 2011). In research terms, phenomenological approaches are based on personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. This approach gives me a particular disposition in regards to knowledge, as I document *my perceptions* of the research project, as opposed to the research project itself, and I (the subject) am always present in the identification of the (research) object. My immersion in the research poses questions concerning ownership of knowledge and of who defines the reality that I present. Peter Reason discusses this problematic in his writing on participative enquiry (Reason, 1994), acknowledging the paradox of writing

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‘about’ research with people, when the participation (and thus the research) belongs to the people who participate. He suggests that:

In some ways to write (and to read) “about” these people’s experience in coming to understand their own worlds is to repossess it as an academic subject that can be studied from the outside. These approaches to enquiry through participation need to be seen as living processes of coming to know rather than as formal academic method. And ... one of the key questions about research is the political one: Who owns knowledge, and thus who can define the reality? (Ibid: 325)

As Reason describes, my research approach can be defined in terms of engaging with a ‘living process of coming to know’, but through engaging with the research in this way, I encounter several issues: firstly, that of accounting for something which I am participating in, and secondly, the ethical issue of ownership of knowledge. In terms of my research with Kaitaisha, I would propose that although I account for their work as both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ (as I discuss in detail in Chapter Three), I am intrinsically part of a collaborative process where an experiential tacit knowledge is shared amongst the participants. In this sense, my research can be defined in terms of co-operative enquiry (as defined by Reason, Ibid: 327) as it engages with a collaborative encounter with experience through critical subjectivity. According to Reason, it is vital that this experience is engaged with through critical subjectivity, and this means that we ‘... accept that our knowing is from a perspective; it also means that we are aware of that perspective and of its bias, and we articulate it in our communications’ (Ibid). As I articulate throughout, my research is clearly drawn from a particular perspective, and, although the definition of what that perspective might be is constantly shifting, I would assert that my primary ‘perspective’ is that of performer/performance-maker.

In their writing on observational techniques, Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler discuss issues of validity and raise important questions that relate to issues of critical subjectivity, stating that ‘Without the benefit of members’ analyses, observers are forced to rely more exclusively on their own perceptions’ (Adler & Adler, 1994: 381). I would not align my research approach with being observational – in the sense that I am a participant and cannot therefore observe from the outside, however, the issue that Adler and Adler raise here is nonetheless relevant in relation to the absence of the accounts of Kaitaisha members own experience of their collaborative practice. It is important to re-emphasize here that I am specifically engaged with documenting my



perceptions of the research project as performer/performance-maker; however, this approach does not mean that I exclude an engagement with critical subjectivity. Adler and Adler outline measures that observers can take to overcome the problem of relying exclusively on their own perceptions, one of which is ‘... in presenting their data, observers can use *verisimilitude*, or *vraisemblance*, a style of writing that draws the reader so closely into the subjects’ worlds that these can be palpably felt’ (Ibid). Adler and Adler assert that written accounts of this kind offer the reader something that they recognize from their own experiences, and that this accords the work a sense of authenticity. In Chapter Five, I draw on such a use of verisimilitude through using a diaristic account of a 2012 collaboration with Kaitaisha in Tokyo; through such an approach I aim to allow the reader to enter my acutely felt experience during this collaboration.

The immersive position that I negotiate throughout the research offers difficulties in terms of accounting for the research, as I have outlined, and I negotiate this immersion, in part, through viewing the reality that I operate in as a process that is *always becoming*. The immersive nature of my approach is essential to my understanding of the research in the sense that through experiencing something I am able to intuitively apprehend its essence. In an attempt to account for the research I utilise a range of approaches and writing styles that are often non-linear and fragmented, and I engage in multiple I and first person methodologies. These include academic writing, first-person descriptive accounts of rehearsal processes, diaristic accounts, the use of images and the use of video documentation. I adopt a range of positions throughout the project which allow me to engage in the research from an ‘insider’/‘outsider’ perspective, from a participatory perspective, and from a spectatorial perspective, and I clearly signpost the particular approach I adopt throughout the thesis.

### **Performance-making practices as a mode of advanced enquiry**

The project engages with practice and documentation as a mode of advanced enquiry, and I draw the complexities of practice as research out in detail in Chapter Two, using my first research project as a case study (Memopia Theatre project ‘Of the Sea’: teaching performer training techniques and directing a devised production at Swansea

Metropolitan University, 2010). As I illustrate throughout the thesis, the research constantly evolves as it engages with the continuously unfolding nature of performance practice and processes. In the initial PaR project I documented the practice in a variety of ways: through film, photographs, sound recordings, notes and participants' accounts; however, as the project revealed (as discussed in detail in Chapter Two), it is clearly impossible to document everything that happens in the studio. For example, whilst engaging with the performer-participant as a practitioner through physically demonstrating, or choreographing, a spontaneous discussion might occur that I might consider useful to document, and it is unfeasible to step aside - as practitioner - and switch the camera on in that moment. In the context of this initial project, where the work was sensitive and new to the participants, I felt it was important to have only one camera in the space so that they were not overly aware of, and distracted by, being recorded. Equally, I limited my filming/photographing in the Kaitaisha studio, as in particular moments I did not want to create a distracting or intruding presence. This approach means that the resulting footage has limitations; however, even with several cameras the material would be limited, as the medium does not allow us to capture the 'liveness' or complexity of the moment. Throughout the research projects I questioned both what should be recorded and how this should be recorded, and also what the intention behind, or purpose, of such a recording was.

In addition to film footage and still images, I collected vast amounts of documentary material from the projects, for example, working notes, diagrams, correspondence, schedules, accounts, text, images, musical and choreographic scores, feedback forms, and programmes. Such a range and quantity of documentary material poses the question as to how one should categorise this material when attempting to account for performance processes in PaR. This also raises questions of *intentionality* when examining the performance document, as Angela Piccini and Caroline Rye suggest:

... it is crucial up front to signpost the difference between 'document' (the unintentional traces, detritus, residues left over from practice-as-research in the form of coffee cups, cigarette butts and the hair, skin and sweat of our bodies that may later be identified as important by the archaeo-activist) and 'documentation' (the intentional desire to create the indexical sign *out of which* meaning might be *revealed*) ... The intentional documentation of practice-as-research through the use of the camera-based technologies provides an illusion of knowing through its dominant alignment with the aesthetics and logics of direct camera. (Piccini and Rye, 2009: 35-6)

As Piccini and Rye discuss, such an ‘illusion of knowing’ is problematic and illustrates the limitations of a video document. Such a document hides the audience, the performance dynamic, and the complex multifaceted ‘liveness’ of the event from the viewer. The footage imposes a particular, limited, partial framing of the space; it is subject to the decisions made by the individual filming the work, and to the history and time of the society in which it is produced, and it is itself a document subject to ‘loss’. The document will clearly always be limited, and the photographic and film ‘remains’ of the project are a fragmentary representation of the performance itself, rather than of the process, and cannot meaningfully reproduce the performer or audience’s experience. Hence, in my project, it is important to consider both the intentionality informing documentation, and the way in which I frame the document, whereby it is always something *other* than the performance – or the performance process – itself. It is vitally important to consider what the function of documentation is within PaR, and to recognise its communicative powers as well as its limitations, and also its insistence on transforming the project’s infinite exchanges into a logical, linear, repeatable representation of the past. As I discuss in detail in the conclusion, I interweave modes of writing and documentation throughout the thesis in an attempt to illuminate the *sensed* and *felt* knowledge of the expert practitioner. The documentation I include is importantly one element of this approach, and is framed in terms of its ability to illuminate the practice, whilst also clearly having limitations in terms of its ability to represent the practice.

Throughout the thesis, I include a number of photographic images (both inserted within the writing and in the Documentation of Practice Disc One and Disc Two), in an effort to exemplify the writing, and to act as a kind of hypotyposis of the practice – a vivid and economical sketch allowing other experts to grasp the general sense of that which is no longer available. Many of the images were taken by myself, and it is important to note here my role in framing and composing these images, which are significantly marked by my absence.

## Thesis outline

I begin this inquiry in Chapter One with a literature review which addresses ‘The Self as Other: Performer Training, Hybridisation, and Inbetweenness’, and frames it in relation to Heidegger’s notion of transformation, whereby one can only become (one)self through becoming other, through alteration (as discussed by Milet (1995)). I focus specifically on writer-practitioner Barba in terms of his engagement with the orient through his ‘Theatre Anthropology’ (Barba & Savarese, 2006 - originally published in 1991), suggesting that his project positions the (largely Oriental) other as the site of desire, with all of the complexity and ambiguity that this position entails. I position my own project as post-Barba’s mimicry and incorporation of the other, whereby through my engagement with Kaitaisha I become other through an alteration which is not absorbed within my identity, but which articulates and directs and divides and splits, and creates a transformation of self. I view such a transformation as one where I am able to gain a sense of clarity (via thematisation), and where my sense of ‘self’ as oneness is forcibly broken apart.

Outlining Barba’s twentieth century ‘anthropological’ project lends a critical framework in terms of both critiquing his use of Asian performer training, addressing the notion of self-transformation, and in positioning my project in a particular historical context. I discuss the criticism Barba has received for his portrayal of the ‘Oriental’ actor, since it foreshadows but differs in many senses from my own twenty first century undertaking, and I trace his approach to a particular shift in the twentieth century, whereby theatre practitioners drew from eastern sources for their approach to training and performance; raising questions that relate to colonialism and to the mythologizing of an ‘other’ that equally reveals a certain distaste for aspects of the occidental self. I draw this out through discussing the ‘post-Barbaesque’ work of practitioner-writer Phillip Zarrilli, and his use of yoga and Asian martial arts in his ‘psychophysical’ actor training, drawing on my first-person experience of his training, and accounting for my understanding of his own rejection of his ‘fragmented’ western body (Zarrilli, 2009: 23). I introduce the work of the post-colonial writer Homi Bhabha, who provides a complex theory of cultural hybridisation, positioning myself within Bhabha’s notion of the ‘inbetween’, and as a *tourist-theoretician*, an expert visitor (a ‘theoretician’ in Ulmer’s terms (1994)), who does not incorporate or imbibe the other, but whose own

identity is opened up or becomes reflexively available through an engagement with the other (for a definition of my use of ‘the other’ see page 37).

In Chapter Two, ‘Accounting for Embodied Knowledge and for Practice as a Mode of Enquiry’, I frame the project’s use of performance-making practices and documentation as a mode of advanced enquiry through drawing on the Memopia Theatre Project ‘Of the Sea’, teaching performer-training techniques at Swansea Metropolitan University (2010) as a case study. I ask to what extent performance practices, in a given disciplinary field, can provide insights into the theorisation of performance that cannot be obtained through more traditional research practices, and I discuss the complex creative-academic issues raised by practice as research. Through discussing this initial PaR project, as the first of five PaR projects throughout this inquiry, I demonstrate the constantly evolving nature of the research as it engages with the continuously unfolding nature of performance-processes.

In Chapter Three, ‘On a Lesson in Writing (from Barthes)<sup>12</sup>: Accounting for process through collaboration with Gekidan Kaitaisha on ‘With Eternal Revolution’ (2010)’, I discuss my reading of a number of texts in light of Kaitaisha’s expert and culturally specific practices, which I engage with from the inside and from the outside as performer-researcher. I frame this chapter in terms of, and draw specifically from, Roland Barthes’ ‘Lesson in Writing’ in *Image, Music, Text* (1984) in an attempt to set up a form of opposition between his ‘Japanese’ project and my own, whereby I consider my own desire for the ‘other’ (or for otherness) in the context of my work with Kaitaisha. I introduce Kaitaisha’s work in detail, outlining their signature practices<sup>13</sup>, and their theorisation of the body.

In Chapter Four, ‘“Bodyness”, the Physically Complex Actional Self, and the Realm of the Possible in the Performer Body’, I trace accounts of ‘body’ historically in order to

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<sup>12</sup> I draw here upon ‘Lesson in Writing’ in Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (1984).

<sup>13</sup> I understand ‘signature’ in terms of Susan Melrose’s ‘signature practices’. According to Melrose, the expert-practitioner engages in signature practices that are recognisable, and that ‘... what is recognised as signature involves a relational mark, established between ‘the work’, its maker/s, and its validation by those whose judgements of taste and value are vital to the disciplines concerned. Signature practices, in other words, are singular or self-defining; but at the same time an aspect of them recurs, across a body of work, and between that work and its contextualising framework/s; and they are repeatedly modulated within given disciplinary parameters’ (Melrose, 2007).

foreground my account of the ‘physically complex actional self’, which draws specifically on my experience of the practicing performer body. I do so through drawing upon notions of ‘bodyness’ as expressed through butoh, and through considering accounts of the body and philosophically positioned theories of the subject and self as defined by Baruch Spinoza (as discussed by Gilles Deleuze, 1988b)<sup>14</sup>, Artaud (1958), Deleuze and Félix Guattari (2004) and Massumi (2002). I argue, from my position as writer-artist-researcher-enquirer, that dance theory’s account of ‘the body’, in which ‘the body’ has been used in a number of different ways to describe something quite different from standard empirical accounts of the body<sup>15</sup>, touches upon broader philosophical questions relating to ways the self of the performer can be understood. I position my understanding of the body, or bodyness, as a site of dilemmas, drawing on the notion of an unfolding, creative or active character of being, which is dynamic, in flux and hard to grasp as a singular, concrete, static, unchanging thing. In order to address the complexity of the physical self and discuss the realm of the possible in the performer body I identify both the complexity of such a performing body *in practice* - in relation to duration - and also the complexity of accounting for such a body, by focusing on the Kaitaisha body, my own body-in-performance, and on collaborative practice with a dancer-performer operating outside of the Kaitaisha context. I suggest that in order to address the complexity of self in the performer body we need to locate *other* notions of self, in the practicing performer body, necessarily viewed from the perspective of a material presence, through looking at the dynamic and relational self that operates in a collaborative framework. I expand upon this notion of an actional and indeed relational self through drawing on Paul Cilliers’ understanding of complex systems (Cilliers, 1998) and I argue that the embodied self of the performer corresponds to such a description. I draw out this complexity of the relational self in collaborative practice through referencing a studio-based collaboration with dance/performance-maker Noyale Colin.

In Chapter Five, ‘The (Dis)location and Transformation of Self in Collaboration’, I draw on my experience of collaborating with Kaitaisha on their performance *Jouissance System* (February 2012, Tokyo), and discuss the complexity of my experience both

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<sup>14</sup> In ‘Spinoza: Practical Philosophy’ (Deleuze, 1988b) Deleuze draws on Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1996/1677), and effectively ‘re-stages’ the work in 20<sup>th</sup> century terms.

<sup>15</sup> I use the term ‘empirical body’ to mean the everyday scientific description, or understanding, of the human body.



within and outside the rehearsal studio, arguing that such layers of experience might allow for infinite potentialities and transformations. I propose that, through such practices, I have been covertly transformed, but that my sense that I am transformed is something I only possess in retrospect. I draw this retrospective sense of transformation out in detail, through describing myself as *chora*, a receptacle that holds forms in Jacques Derrida's terms (from his "*Chora*", in *Etudes offertes a Jean Pierre Vernant*, 1987) as discussed in Ulmer (1994), without the capacity to retain their shape or identity; I recognise my self to be framed, in Kaitaisha's composition, in ways that allow them to use me as an 'occidental' space-holder. I discuss the temporal self, in philosopher Rosenthal's terms (these are pragmatic and speculative) (Rosenthal, 2000), and describe the self as constitutively transformative and made 'other' to itself.

In the conclusion I argue that the modes of writing and documentation of practice that I interweave throughout the thesis provide insights into the complexity of the self of the performer as 'other'. I locate the multiplicity of the virtual body that exists in an "inbetween" space (Bhabha, 1994) as an experience of being (as a performer) which cannot be articulated through a single mode of writing or practice, and I propose that my simultaneous use of documented practice and different modes of writing can be understood to make an original contribution to knowledge specific to the disciplines of performance training and mixed-mode performance writing. I maintain that my project does not re-enact philosophy, but rather both considers philosophical knowledge *through* performance and aims to produce a performance-philosophical knowledge, whilst exposing the inadequacies of discourses which purport to offer phenomenological accounts of what it is to perform. I argue that through my attempts to capture the complexity of the enquiry I create a layered, multifaceted and multi-linear map of performer-bodyness and performer-selfhood. I propose that my inquiry offers new insights and contributes to current research in the fields of performance in terms of the illumination of the *sensed* and *felt* knowledge of the expert practitioner as expressed through interwoven modes of research; that it accounts for the other's 'trace' in performer training and practice and for the transformation of the performer through collaborative practices, and it addresses expertise and virtuosity in performer training.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Self as Other: Performer Training, Hybridisation, and Inbetweenness



Figure 27: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies Part One* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, Nakajima Miyuki, Mikyoung Jun Pearce, Katarzyna Pastuszek, Hino Hiruko, and Elena Polzer, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

In *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (2006, first published in 1991 and co-authored by Nicola Savarese), Eugenio Barba proposes that theatrical representation can be universal. Through his notion of ‘theatre anthropology’ he considers that ‘... the pre-expressive level is at the root of the various performing techniques and that there exists, independently of traditional culture, a transcultural scenic ‘physiology’” (Ibid: 218). This notion of the ‘pre-expressive’ is central to this inquiry, and I return to it in detail in what follows. At this point, I want to underline one particular notion taken from Barba above: his reference to “the various performing techniques” that can be linked back to a sameness, that is, “a transcultural scenic physiology” that would, then, be shared by all performers. Next, I propose to cite a rather different source: in *Tekhnema 2 / "Technics and Finitude"* ‘Experience as

Technique of the Self”, Jean-Philippe Milet draws extensively on Heidegger and proposes that through the concept of a ‘technics of the self’, the singularity of experience can be thought. He asks:

How can technicity be the mark of experience? This may appear immediately paradoxical, if, on the one hand, one understands by technics transmissible rules, and if, on the other, one understands by the singularity of experience resistance to iterability and to translation into other forms.

He goes on to argue that

... the very heterogeneity of experience is to be found in its technical dimension; that is, that there can be no experience without transformation, above all, without transformation of the self, and that there can be no transformation without technics. What do I mean by transformation? As Heidegger attests, to transform oneself is to become other: ‘To undergo an experience with something—be it a thing, a person, or a god—means that this something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us’ (Heidegger, 1982: 57). If there is a ‘subject’ of experience, it is achieved in its ‘arche-passivity’: ‘When we talk of undergoing an experience, we mean specifically that the experience is not of our own making; to undergo here means that we endure it, suffer it, receive it as it strikes us and submit to it’. (Heidegger, 1982: Ibid)

Experience, he adds,

trans-forms in the sense that it acquires form at the end of a crossing, of a trial of endurance, *après coup*. To become other is to become self. In other words, one can only become (one)self through becoming other (*en s’alterant*), through alteration. Constitutive of identity, this alteration is not absorbed within identity; it opens it up in a double sense—it both articulates and directs it, and divides and splits it. Through experience an ipseity is attained, falls upon itself, as event, singularity—always retrospectively. For the ‘subject’ of experience, to become is to come to oneself in the incalculability of one’s coming to self. (Milet, 1995)

I intend to position the brief literature review that this chapter aims to carry out in terms of Heidegger’s notion of transformation of the self via *technics*, which supposes that one can only become (one)self through becoming other, through alteration<sup>16</sup> - an alteration which seems to entail a certain violence – it ‘divides and splits it’. I want to identify this question of an ongoing transformation (of self) as central to the way I am

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<sup>16</sup> I am making a strategic and notional use of this aspect of Heidegger’s writing because of my sense of its empirical fit with my understanding of self and transformation; my project does not extend to an in depth analysis of Heidegger’s writing.

approaching the matter of the expert performer<sup>17</sup>. In other words, the present literature review is explicitly critical and focused on a particular issue: how to transform the self systematically in order to perform and be recognised transculturally as performer? I propose to focus primarily on the work of writer-practitioner Barba in terms of his engagement with the orient, and I will argue, far from originally, and drawing from the Lacanian tradition (via my reading of a number of feminist writers - for example, Said, 2003 and Rose, 2005), that his project positions the other as the site of desire (plainly anticipating my own work with Gekidan Kaitaisha). This positioning of the other whereby, arguably, Barba incorporates, imbibes, or desires to become the other, is however at odds with Heidegger's claim, as we see in Milet, above, that alteration is not absorbed within identity, but opens it up, through articulating, directing and dividing and splitting it. I intend to position my own project as *post* Barba's mimicry and incorporation of the other, and within Heidegger's notion of an ongoing transformation – “in the incalculability of one's coming to self” (Milet, 1995). That is to say that through my engagement with Kaitaisha I become other through an alteration which is not absorbed within my identity, but which articulates and directs and divides and splits, and contributes to an ongoing transformation and reinvention of the creative self that is characterised by a small-scale break and rupture. In actional terms, in other words, the performer self cannot be fixed or constant, but must be ready, instead, to break.

I have chosen to draw specifically on the writing of Barba in order to frame both my project as a whole, and my examination in this chapter on performer training, hybridisation, ‘inbetweenness’, and the self as other for several reasons. Barba's writing and research, as conducted within the *Odin Teatret* and the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), was one of the first attempts by a European practitioner

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<sup>17</sup>I regard the question of transformation (of self) as central to my approach towards the matter of the expert performer in terms of a process that is instigated by all aspects of what an expert performer might experience with respect to training, rehearsing and performing. Within this I include and identify the sense of suffering another person's decision-making process from my experience with Kaitaisha, where the director is likely to impose experience on a performer who can then only ‘endure it, suffer it’. This sense of suffering in relation to my experience of working with Kaitaisha is willingly undertaken, as I discuss in Chapter Three, where I define the performer-director relationship in terms of Michel de Certeau's notion of belief, which identifies investment or belief in the other in terms of a contract or system of expectations.

to outline a quasi-systematic study of ‘non-European’<sup>18</sup> performance<sup>19</sup>, as accounted for in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (2006). Although this text draws on both eastern and western sources, Barba located Theatre Anthropology (as he defined it) as providing an account of a ‘codified tradition’ and ‘absolute advice’ to the performer, drawn specifically from Asian performer training (Barba & Savarese, 2006: 6 – 7).

Barba, as I signal below, has been criticised for portraying a vision of the ‘Oriental’ actor that is lacking any socio-cultural or historical context (whereas the occidental actor must be aware of these); for attempting to codify complex techniques that are deeply embedded in specific training processes; and for his notion of pre-expressivity. Barba’s approach can be traced to a particular shift in the twentieth century, whereby a number of theatre practitioners – following strategic moves by Artaud, Bertolt Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski, among others – drew from eastern sources not only for their approach to training and performance, but to what theatre might be. Such now notorious ‘borrowings’ raise questions that relate to colonialism and to the mythologizing of the ‘other’, and I will suggest, as have others, that traces of such approaches remain in Barba’s Theatre Anthropology. My critique revisits an already established critical field (Turner, 2004; De Marinis 1995; Watson, 2002; Zarrilli, 1988) in order to relocate it within my own area of expert practices.

Outlining Barba’s project provides us here with a critical framework that both critiques his use of Asian performer training, in terms of addressing the notion of self-transformation, and also positioning my own project in a particular historical context. I draw this out in the present chapter, by discussing the work of practitioner-writer Phillip Zarrilli, and his use of yoga and Asian martial arts in his ‘psychophysical’ actor training. I draw on Zarrilli’s account of his systematic training approach in *Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach after Stanislavski* (2009), and as I directly experienced it during the ‘Making the Body All Eyes: Psychophysical process through Asian martial/meditation arts’ workshop, led by Zarrilli in July 2010. I discuss my perception of his work, which is that Zarrilli deliberately distances himself and his

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<sup>18</sup> Note that the prefix to the qualifier (“non-European”) creates a negative definition, in comparison to ‘European’ as the first term, in comparison with which the other so-described is unavoidably negativised and secondary.

<sup>19</sup> As outlined by Rustom Bharucha (Bharucha, 1990: 55).



approach from claiming to ‘become’ the other, locating himself instead in an intercultural position, and yet – as I see it – his approach is located within the turn towards the east following Barba et al, and a rejection of his ‘fragmented’ western body (Zarrilli, 2009: 23).

I briefly extend this complex cross-cultural negotiation to the problematic of Performance Studies within the context of globalisation, arguing that although it draws on a range of cultural practices, it is located, primarily, within western discourses<sup>20</sup>. I extend the inquiry by discussing Rustom Bharucha’s criticisms of Richard Schechner’s interculturalism as a foundation for the discipline of Performance Studies. This leads me to bring the work of post-colonial writer Homi Bhabha into the frame: Bhabha captures the ambiguity of projects, such as those of Barba and Zarrilli, and provides a complex theory of cultural hybridisation. It is important to note here that I regard ‘cultural hybridisation’ as a contentious notion; the ‘hybrid’ is often approached as a new breed - a fusing of two different elements, as distinct from a combination that might be loose and reversible.

I position myself within Bhabha’s notion of the ‘inbetween’, and as a tourist-theoretician (in Gregory Ulmer’s terms, Ulmer 1994), a visitor, who does not incorporate or imbibe the other, but whose own identity and sense of self in action is opened up through an engagement with the other. As I discuss in detail in Chapter Five, I describe my practice with Kaitaisha in terms of the sense that I am constantly changing and becoming other to myself (in Heidegger’s terms cited by Milet (above)) and in terms of the symbolic function that I serve within Kaitaisha’s performances. I position my project as post Barba and Zarrilli, in the sense that I have effectively been ‘imported’ by Kaitaisha in their own role as tourist-researchers (during the *Dream Regime* project that I outline below on page 84), which I understand to mean that in these precise terms, my performer-self is desired by, imported, and ‘re-mapped’ by the other in ways that suit their project, as well as my own.

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<sup>20</sup> This is more recently discussed in ‘Is Performance Studies Imperialist?’ by Jon McKenzie (2006, 50:4), and responded to by Raznovich, Schechner, Barba, Kusuhara, Takahashi, Sun, Taylor, and Gómez-Peña in ‘Is Performance Studies Imperialist? Part 3: A Forum’ (Raznovich et al., 2007, 51:4).

## Historical contexts

Vsevolod Meyerhold (Braun, 1978), Brecht (1964), and Artaud (1958), significant figures of early twentieth-century theatre, were amongst those who, in different ways, looked beyond western theatre practices, and attempted to transmit their interpretation of what they encountered in eastern theatre practices to western audiences. Meyerhold discovered an economy of movement in acting in Japanese Noh drama, which stood in contrast to western realism and naturalism (Murray & Keefe, 2007: 193 – 4), whilst Brecht's theory of estrangement drew on his observation of Chinese actor Mei Lanfang (although there appears to have been a mutual misunderstanding of each other's practice (Jay Williams, 2006: 508 – 9)). I do not intend to discuss these practitioners' work in detail; however, I do propose to draw on that of Artaud. I will also reference Artaud's turn towards eastern performance practices in Chapter 4, where I draw on his notion of the 'body without organs', which he proposed in '*Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*' ('To have done with the judgement of god'), a radio play recorded in 1947 (Artaud, 1976).

In 1922, Artaud witnessed Cambodian dancers performing in a replica of the temple of Angkor at the Marseilles Colonial Exhibition, and in 1931 he saw a performance by Balinese dancers at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris; he drew on these experiences to write his essays 'On the Balinese Theatre' (1931) and 'Oriental and Occidental Theatre' (1935) (Artaud, 1958). Clearly, what Artaud witnessed offered him something that he felt not to be available in western theatrical discourse and performance practices: 'The spectacle of the Balinese theater, which draws upon dance, song, pantomime – and a little of the theater as we understand it in the Occident – restores theater ... to its original destiny which it presents as a combination of all these elements fused together in a perspective of hallucination and fear' (Artaud, 1958: 53). Indeed, Artaud goes on to describe Balinese theatre in a way that reveals his wonder and fascination:

What is in fact most striking in this spectacle – so well contrived to disconcert our Occidental conceptions of theater that many will deny it has any theatrical quality, whereas it is the most beautiful manifestation of pure theater it has been our privilege to see – what is striking and disconcerting for Europeans like ourselves is the admirable intellectuality that one senses crackling everywhere in the close and subtle web of gestures, in the infinitely varied modulations of voice, in this sonorous rain resounding as if from an immense dripping forest, and in the equally sonorous interlacing of movements. There is no transition from a gesture to a cry or a sound: all the senses interpenetrate, as if through strange channels hollowed out in the mind itself! (Ibid: 57)

He describes the Balinese performers as magnificent, and observes that their ‘... very elevation renders the level of our modern Occidental theater unspeakably gross and childish’ (Ibid: 65); he continues to describe the performance he witnessed in such terms – in my interpretation, he is intoxicated with what he has seen. Artaud’s turn towards Oriental theatre is formed, in part, by his interest in redressing the imbalance that favoured verbal language in western theatre, in which the body remains underdeveloped, as he states: ‘... Balinese theater has revealed to us a physical and non-verbal idea of the theater, in which the theater is contained within the limits of everything that can happen on a stage, independently of the written text, whereas the theater as we conceive it in the Occident has declared its alliance with the text and finds itself limited by it’ (Ibid: 68).

Artaud appears in these essays to have a very clear view of what oriental theatre *is*, and yet, as Susan Sontag has stated in her essay ‘From Approaching Artaud’, his vision of such theatre was a fiction:

The inspiration for Artaud’s ideas about theatre came from Southeast Asia ... But the stimulus could just as well have come from observing the theatre of a Dahomey tribe or the shamanistic ceremonies of the Patagonia Indians. What counts is that the other culture be genuinely other; that is, non-Western and non-contemporary. (Sontag, 2004: 91)

The Balinese theatre that Artaud writes about – a decontextualised version of his brief encounter at a world trade fair displaying other than western, exotic cultural products - ‘fits’ his vision of theatre, and allows him to distance himself from European theatre practice and thus focus on his ideological alternative<sup>21</sup>. Rustom Bharucha criticises Artaud in terms of incorporating eastern performance traditions into fluid categories like the ‘oriental theatre’ (Bharucha, 1990: 2), thus flattening out such practices. I have included this brief account of Artaud’s use of Asian theatre practice to illustrate, in part, the problematic nature of the incorporation of intercultural practices<sup>22</sup>; to outline the

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<sup>21</sup> It is relevant to note here Artaud’s own sense of self, which some might describe as neurotic or schizoid, and it could be argued that he sought to escape his *self* as much as escape the west. Clearly, Artaud’s condition does not necessarily involve him seeking to escape his ‘self’, however it is relevant to acknowledge his condition. Discussing the fragmented body and the self/body dichotomy in relation to Artaud is beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>22</sup> In this notorious case, Artaud has fictionalised and decontextualised Southeast Asian performance and displays his fascination with ‘otherness’.

historical context in which Barba emerged; and to contextualise my own project with Kaitaisha<sup>23</sup>.

This shift in the latter half of the twentieth century to what has been described as an intercultural approach to theatre making can be seen in the work of Peter Brook, Jacques Lecoq, Ariane Mnouchkine, Grotowski, Barba, Zarrilli, and many others who acknowledge a diversity of influences on their work. Clearly, as Gary Jay Williams observes, intercultural exchanges have occurred throughout theatre history, and he states that:

Such historical perspective may be helpful amid the postcolonial anxiety over intercultural theatre, in which there has been a tendency to think of cultures as unified and static, and to suppose that traditional theatre forms (Kabuki for example) exist pure and unchanging in some parallel universe of timeless authenticity, or ought to. (Jay Williams, 2006: 486)

As Zarrilli has stated, such intercultural ‘borrowings’ have raised many concerns. Mnouchkine and Brook have been criticised for exploiting and distorting their use of other than western cultural forms, and in particular, Brook has been extensively criticised for his apparent ‘mis-appropriation’ of Indian culture in his *Mahabharata* (Bharucha, 1990). Mnouchkine goes as far to claim that ‘all theatre is oriental’, asserting that:

... we go East to look for theatre. Artaud said, ‘All theatre is oriental’ ... I believe Artaud is right. So I tell actors to look for everything in the East. Myth and reality, interiority and exteriorisation, and the autopsy of the heart by the body ... We also go to look for non-realism or theatricality. The West has only given birth to the *commedia dell’arte* – and even this comes from Asia – and to a certain type of realism, from which great actors escape. (Féral, 1999: 173)

Mnouchkine’s view can be seen to express several concerns: a curiosity for the ‘other’ and other than western forms, a rejection – or even despair for – the west, and a need to look beyond the domination of psychological realism in western theatre for influences. The constitutive ‘oriental’ quality of theatre, borrowed by Mnouchkine from Artaud, is curious, but may perhaps be understood in terms of the transformation (or loss) of self (or the absence of a preoccupation with self) found in the oriental traditions, such as the

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<sup>23</sup> Clearly, this brief account, and referencing Artaud alone, does not fully account for the complexity and history of the incorporation of intercultural practices. Expanding further on the wider history of such practices and the debates that they give rise to is however beyond the scope of this project.

taking on and the inhabiting of otherness – typified by the mask worn - which we can see in the Noh performer. Such an ‘indwelling’ in otherness may also involve a rejection – explicit or implicit - of the focus on the self of psychologising work on dramatic character. Indeed, during the latter half of the twentieth century, many practitioners were developing an alternative theatrical language, and they were able to draw from Asian performance practices.

### **Hybrid intercultural practices**

What I have called a hybridity of practice<sup>24</sup> constitutes my own performer training, as I have engaged with a number of practices in their hybridised forms. One aspect of my training was with Mike Pearson in a movement vocabulary that he has developed over many years called ‘In all Languages’<sup>25</sup>. Pearson studied Noh theatre with Kanze Hideo in Tokyo in 1980, which played an important part in his training, as he states in an interview with Nick Kaye and Gabriella Giannachi, as part of ‘The Presence Project’: ‘I really do feel that experience is embodied in how I am – in certain predilections or desires for stillness from time to time or in cutting the text from the action for instance, those kinds of things’ (Kaye and Giannachi, 2006). Pearson accounts for his Noh training as creating a particular kind of body that has a heightened awareness of actions, arguing that this detailed knowledge of an approach to presence and form has fed into his movement vocabulary. Yet, Pearson observes that his physical presence in performance is ‘... the result of a whole series of historical moments and processes that one has gone through - of training and so on’ (Ibid). What is of interest to me here is that, for Pearson, and many others, their engagement with other-than-western forms is simply part of their training, which feeds into a whole spectrum of training experiences. Pearson’s training in Noh appears to have offered him something that was not available to him in the UK, and he has appropriated this training and the physical control that it offers him within his own approach to movement. Yet, whilst Pearson acknowledges

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<sup>24</sup>In the context of the hybrid and my performer self, I regard as problematic the definition of the hybrid as a singular new breed, rather, I regard it as both constantly shifting and interdisciplinary.

<sup>25</sup> I trained in ‘In all Languages’ with Pearson during my degree studies at Aberystwyth University (1998 – 2001), when Pearson was establishing the Performance Studies degree course. He developed this movement vocabulary during his time as co-director of Wales-based Brith Gof Theatre Company (1981 – 1997).

that Noh training was an important part of his development as a practitioner, he also accounts for it as one aspect of a whole series of historical moments and processes, within which, his encounters with Polish performers, for example, his archaeological training, and his engagement with rural Welsh and international culture and politics during this period would have equal bearing on his development as a practitioner.

I would argue that the majority of practitioners' training backgrounds, including my own, are constituted of a series of such historical moments, encounters and processes, many of which can be described as 'intercultural'. The question that such approaches pose, I would argue, is how such intercultural experiences might be framed within the complexity of a post-colonial and, arguably, a borderless globalised world of cultural exchange. Such training approaches invite the question of what might be gained and lost when the trainee is unaware of the cultural origin (and the cultural cost) of an approach or method, and within this the already hybridised or deracinated nature of these approaches or methods should be considered. Clearly, these questions move beyond Artaud or Brecht's 'borrowings', which, although clearly problematic and imperfect, were undertaken with an acknowledgement of where they thought they were 'borrowing' from.

There are complex implications of intercultural practices that occur within the power-imbalances of globalisation and the post-colonial. As Simon Murray and John Keefe suggest, there are wider cultural and political dimensions to intercultural practice that '... may involve the destroying, dissolving, colonising, modifying or taking over of one culture's practice by another. To borrow implies that what has been used will be repaid, given back ...' (Murray & Keefe, 2007: 188). I would argue that we can never fully account for such intercultural practice, within which political neutrality and 'pure' culture do not exist, and where it is clearly problematic to discuss binaries such as 'western' and 'non-western' (Said, 2003: xvii)<sup>26</sup>. Yet it is vital to acknowledge that I am writing from a particular 'western' perspective as I critically consider such approaches. It is important then to draw here on Bharucha, as an Indian theatre practitioner also writing from a particular perspective, as he questions the validity of interculturalism, with particular reference to Indian theatre. Bharucha argues that:

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<sup>26</sup> I will go on to discuss in detail the problematic of such binaries, referencing Said's *Orientalism* (2003), in Chapter Three 'A Lesson in Writing'.



... the implications of interculturalism are very different for people in impoverished, 'developing' countries like India, and for their counterparts in technologically advanced, capitalist societies like America, where interculturalism has been more strongly promoted both as a philosophy and a business.

In the case of India, the exposure to 'other' cultures has not always been a matter of choice. Colonialism, one might say, does not operate through principals of 'exchange'. Rather, it appropriates, decontextualizes, and represents the 'other' culture, often with the complicity of its colonized subjects. It legitimates its authority only by asserting its cultural superiority. (Bharucha, 1990: 1 – 2)

Importantly, he goes on to say:

Whether one views this fascination for predominantly non-Western cultures as part of a general curiosity for the exotic, or as a perpetuation and consolidation of 'orientalism', would depend on one's political position and place in history. For my own part, I believe that as much as one would like to accept the seeming openness of Euro-American interculturalists to other cultures, the larger economic and political domination of the west has clearly constrained, if not negated the possibilities of a genuine exchange. In the best of all possible worlds, interculturalism could be viewed as a 'two-way street', based on a mutual reciprocity of needs. But in actuality, where it is the West that extends its domination to cultural matters, this 'two-way street' could be more accurately described as a 'dead-end'. (Ibid: 2)

I discuss below, within the context of my collaborative practices with Kaitaisha, whether such a genuine exchange, that fulfils Bharucha's described two-way street based on a mutual reciprocity of needs, is in fact possible. After all, I have already described my own involvement as 'imported' and 'other'/'othered'. What is of interest to me here is Bharucha's criticism, following his statement above, of the ways western practitioners have framed their use of performance traditions of the east; he includes Artaud, Barba and Schechner in this critique.

Bharucha's main criticism of Schechner is based on the latter's intercultural performance theories, which form in turn one of the bases of the discipline of Performance Studies. It is important to note here that Schechner, writing in his article on 'A New Paradigm for the Academy'<sup>27</sup> (Schechner, 1992), called at the time for theatre departments to become performance departments, whereby 'performance' goes

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<sup>27</sup> As drawn from his keynote panel of the August 1992 Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) national conference in Atlanta.

beyond the enactment of Eurocentric drama, and includes entertainments, rituals, politics, economics, and person-to-person interactions, in the Goffman tradition<sup>28</sup>. He goes on to say that ‘... it is not only a question of studying different cultures from a scholarly perspective, but of seeing and doing rituals, dramas, celebrations, and festivals from Africa, Asia, Europe, Native America and Latin America’ (Ibid: 9). Schechner called for ‘our brightest young professors’ (Ibid: 10) to research intercultural and ‘non’-Western performance (once again a revealing negative definition) with a view to formalising and disseminating such knowledge. Bharucha’s critique of Schechner is based on his assertion that Schechner’s preoccupation with the ‘self’ overpowers his representation of ‘other’ cultures (Bharucha, 1990: 28); the Other is then a projection of Schechner’s ego (Ibid), and in doing this Schechner decontextualises, demystifies and removes spirituality from cultural and religious practices as they fall under his postmodern umbrella of performance theory. Such a critique is interesting on several accounts: the assertion that Schechner cannot have an encounter with (and thus be transformed by, in Heidegger’s terms) the ‘other’, because the ‘other’ is merely a projection of his ego; the assertion that performance theory decontextualises practices in a multitude of ways, and within this Schechner fails to acknowledge the distortion of original rituals; and the claim that Schechner is overwhelmingly concerned with *his own* experience ‘... which he documents through excerpts from his notebook, random images, interviews, maps, charts and analogies to specifically Euro-American cultural stimuli’ (Ibid: 30), where, for example, ritual processions of pilgrims remind him of Disneyland. In addition, Bharucha criticises Schechner in terms of cultural tourism, for failing to ‘... analyse, or even acknowledge, the social and human turmoil resulting from this exposure of ‘traditional’ performers to the ‘international’ market’ (Ibid: 36). Bharucha positions Schechner’s work in terms of its being part of an unfair intercultural exchange which westerners have initiated and controlled.

What is striking to me is Schechner’s call out to ‘our brightest young professors’ (Ibid: 10) to research intercultural and non-Western performance, as in my view this positions such professors as making an anthropological study of the other. I understand the term

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<sup>28</sup> The sociologist Erving Goffman’s formulation of symbolic interaction in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1990 c1959) raised original questions about the socially constructed self and outlines a connection between the acts that people put on in their daily life and theatrical performances.

‘anthropology’, and its usage, as the science of man, as presupposing a particular privileged positioning, where the other is traditionally located as an object of study that can be surveyed by the ‘invisible’ anthropologist<sup>29</sup>. This locating of the other as an object of study again recalls my reading of Milet, where the objectification of the other prevents an encounter that allows for a transformation of the self. This problematic is inherent in Barba’s naming of his project as ‘Theatre Anthropology’, and thus from the outset, we are presented with a view that locates the ‘other’ as a static object of study. I would argue that in Schechner’s and Barba’s projects the other is located outside of themselves, as the desirable other that can be studied, accounted for, represented and repeated through mimicry.

In my view, their wish is to erase their presence from such (mis)representations, and yet precisely because of their problematic approach to, and framing, of the other, they place themselves at the very centre of such representations. Zarrilli has criticised Barba along such lines<sup>30</sup>, asking what can be learnt by ‘... reading narratives which assume the Asian as the Other and proceed to essentialize all experience (including that of the Other) into a single, reified composite’? (Zarrilli, 1988: 103). Zarrilli goes on to assert that through such narratives we surely learn more about the author’s gaze than we do about the ‘other’, or about performance, and that he is troubled by the ‘... solitary, universalizing voice precluding a dialectical process of investigation’ (Ibid). The question also remains of how one should understand such narratives once they are transported outside of their original contexts, and placed in performances, conferences, and texts that attempt to represent and account for them.

### **Eugenio Barba: ‘Theatre Anthropology’**

In his introduction to *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (Barba & Savarese, 2006) Barba stated that:

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<sup>29</sup> This problematic has been discussed at length in *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford & Marcus, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> Zarrilli is writing here in an article entitled ‘For whom is the “Invisible” Not Visible? Reflections on representations in the work of Eugenio Barba’. The article was published in *The Drama Review: A Journal of Performance Studies*, volume 32 (1988), and was written as a response to the International School for Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) congress on ‘The Female Role as Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures’, which took place on the 17 – 22 September 1986 in Holstebro, Denmark, and was organised by Barba.

... theatre anthropology is the study of the behaviour of the human being when it uses its physical and mental presence in an organised performance situation and according to principals that are different to those used in daily life. This extra-daily use of the body is what is called technique (Ibid: 5).

‘A transcultural analysis of performance’, he observed,

reveals that the performer’s work is the result of the fusion of three aspects which reflect three different levels of organisation. 1) The performers’ personalities, their sensibilities, their artistic intelligence, their social *personae*: those characteristics that make them unique and one of a kind. 2) The particularities of the traditions and the socio-historical contexts through which the unique personality of a performer is manifest. 3) The use of physiology according to extra-daily body techniques. The recurrent and transcultural principals on which these extra-daily techniques are defined by theatre anthropology as the field of pre-expressivity (Ibid: 5).

The first aspect, Barba writes, ‘is individual’.

The second is common to all those who belong to the same performance genre. Only the third concerns all performers from every era and culture: it can be called the performance’s ‘biological’ level. The first two aspects determine the transition from pre-expressivity to expression, the third is the *idem* that does not vary; it underlines the various individual, artistic and cultural variants. (Ibid: 5)

I have quoted Barba at length here to highlight the main aspects that underpin his theatre anthropology. I propose to draw on these aspects, and their application, as Barba describes, to the performer’s creative work, to outline the ways in which I find his project problematic, particularly in relation to the question of transformation of self as central to the matter of the expert performer. Barba’s project, as documented in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, first published in the early-1990s, was clearly ambitious and notable both in its depth of content and in its empirical approach, and yet, through framing itself as a handbook and guide for theatre practitioners, students, and scholars of transcultural performance, it presented itself as having expert knowledge on a vast range of practices, whilst making the assumption that it might be in a position to both account for these practices and somehow pass them on. It is not my intention to draw on Barba’s text in full, however, I propose to discuss those assertions and assumptions that underpin theatre anthropology, that in my view, are highly problematic in terms of the performer body (or the trained performer’s body) and representations of the other (see page 37 for my use of ‘the other’). I also want to return to the issues of the ‘techniques’ specific to the discipline, and/or ‘of the self’ with which I began this chapter.

Barba sets out to understand the ‘secrets’ of technique, to study the rules of behaviour from codified traditions that primarily belong to Asian performance, and to look for commonalities in these traditions. What is initially striking about Barba’s approach is that he assumes he can find commonalities, from without<sup>31</sup>, across a multitude of complex practices, and reduce them to a set of rules and principles. By presenting these practices in such a way, Barba positions himself as an expert on all of them, yet importantly, as director, his expertise is through *spectating*, as opposed to an embodied expert practice. Such an assumption forms part of a general problematic in Barba’s approach, particularly in his position as an ‘outsider’ in relation to these practices, as I have outlined above. What I am primarily concerned with is theatre anthropology’s notion of the pre-expressive; this is a state the performer, regardless of cultural tradition and specifics, is required to meet in order to achieve presence, and which underlies Barba’s approach to the translation and dissemination of complex practices.

Barba identified the notion of the pre-expressive as theatre anthropology’s primary field of study, claiming that by separating this level during training, any performer in any cultural context can work on it, ‘... *as if*, in this phase, the principal objective was the energy, the presence, the *bios* of his actions and not their meaning’ (Ibid: 218). He goes on to note that within theatre anthropology ‘... the pre-expressive level is at the root of the various performing techniques and that there exists, independently of traditional culture, a transcultural scenic ‘physiology’’ (Ibid). Barba claimed to identify universal principles that govern pre-expressivity; he argued that these are identifiable within the various performance traditions that he draws on. This pre-expressive state, according to Barba, allows the performer to access a *point of imbalance* and to always be in a state of readiness and thus have *presence*. In my view, Barba’s approach is problematically circular, whereby the condition of pre-expressivity neither emerges from, nor is descriptive of a neutral state; rather, it emerges from, and expresses a particular cultural milieu. Such an arguably liberal approach presupposes that modern western culture (and its dominant models of knowledge) has a privileged eyrie from which its members can look down at or onto other cultures, and that it is somehow neutral or ‘outside’.

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<sup>31</sup> It is important to note here that within my own project I operate as an immersed researcher and attempt to avoid the degree of objectification that Barba presents as he operates outside of these practices.

Bharucha has written critically of Barba's use of extra-daily techniques from particular traditions, claiming that their individual '... differences of history cannot be subsumed in a "tradition of traditions" that cuts across all national, temporal and spatial barriers' (Bharucha, 1990: 61), not least because the performers cannot transcend signs of racial identity and are thus never wholly 'neutral'. Bharucha was particularly critical of Barba's pre-expressivity, viewing the process as reducing an individual to an anatomy or an empty shell, which separates the actor from their culture, history and style, neutralises sexuality, and '... diffuses the potentialities of the body, and more crucially, their possibilities of rendering multiple meanings' (Ibid: 57). Underpinning my difficulty with Barba's theatre anthropology, is not only the fact that the pre-expressive state is problematic in Bharucha's terms, as a reduction of the body to an anatomy devoid of context, but relatedly, and perhaps more significantly, it is a state which is incoherent according to its own terms, and the aspiration to achieve it is wrong-headed.

I would suggest that Barba could only ever access a *propositional knowledge*<sup>32</sup> of various practices, and that this propositionality is itself 'a construct', whereby every account emerges in, or from, its own situation; this is clearly at odds with the premise that I have located as central to my enquiry of transformation of self as essential to the expert performer. Barba's attempts to pin down the body as a fixed and static entity is problematic both in relation to my understanding of the terms he establishes for his own project and to my understanding of the body, which, in Foucault's terms (1980a)<sup>33</sup>, I view not as a fixed entity, but as a heterogeneous multiplicity<sup>34</sup>. Hence, in such poststructuralist terms, any supposedly neutral or pre-existing state is a fiction. I position my own understanding of the body, or bodyness, as a site of dilemmas, and internal contradictions, and, in later chapters, I will draw on the unfolding, creative or active character of being, which is dynamic, in flux, and hard to grasp as a singular concrete static unchanging entity.

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<sup>32</sup> I use the epistemological term 'propositional knowledge' in terms of a knowledge of facts, whereby such a knowledge offers neither sufficient personal or procedural knowledge of something.

<sup>33</sup> In the essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (1980a) Foucault conceptualises the body as a heterogeneous multiplicity, as opposed to a fixed entity, describing such a body as a volume in perpetual disintegration.

<sup>34</sup> I discuss this notion of the body in detail in Chapter Four.



In relation to my response to Barba's Theatre Anthropology my own enquiry attempts to explore whether one can account for performer training and performer expertise, whether performer training is 'transferable', and whether a transformation of the self can be achieved if a performer is working within a particular training system. These questions are framed specifically in relation to Barba's representations of the other, and my critique of this informs my own attempts to represent Gekidan Kaitaisha's practice within my project. In relation to my critique of Barba's position as an expert spectator my project specifically focuses on my experience of an *embodied* expert practice, hence, I endeavour to explore the questions I have outlined in terms of my own experience of them, as opposed to viewing them from the outside. My project is framed specifically in terms of context, as I illustrate in Chapter Five, and this is a reflection of the critique I outline of Theatre Anthropology's reduction of an individual to an anatomy, separating the performer from their culture, history and style.

### **Phillip Zarrilli: 'Psychophysical' training**

Zarrilli, in a very different manner from Barba, also attempts to pin-down, or frame, what the body might be, through making certain assumptions about what a 'western' body is. In his most recent text, *Psychophysical Acting*, he aims to equip actors with practical and conceptual tools with which to approach their work (Zarrilli, 2009). Zarrilli's approach draws on a psychophysical training, via Asian martial arts and yoga, that he has developed since 1976, and through which the performer '... constantly re-educates her bodymind so that one looks and sees, listens and hears anew each time one enters the training studio or stage' (Ibid: 1). Zarrilli is concerned with energy, awareness, and presence in the performer; how he might heighten these through his training processes; and how such processes can be applied to various dramaturgies. He discusses such training processes in detail in his text, tracing the notion of the 'psychophysical' historically, from Stanislavski; explaining the processes of his own training in India; and accounting for the application of his training to contemporary dramaturgies.

As I have highlighted, Zarrilli deliberately locates himself in an intercultural position, having previously criticised Barba for his representations of the 'Asian Other' (Zarrilli, 1988), yet his interculturalism is nonetheless western in its positioning. Zarrilli's

approach is of interest to me on several accounts: firstly, Zarrilli represents a post-WWII generational *turn* towards Asian performer training; secondly, he appears to reject his own 'fragmented' western body, and thus to have found, in certain Asian practices, something that he has not been able to locate elsewhere (and not least in the self). Thirdly, I would argue on the basis of my having experienced his training first hand, that I was left with a sense of unease in terms of the ways these practices might be disseminated. Consequently, as a practitioner/participant with an experiential knowledge of these practices, I am interested in asking, at this point, what caused this unease, as well as where this unease is located.

Zarrilli discusses Western mind-body dualism in terms of its being inherent (Ibid: 18), and as a continuation of this, he locates himself as an American male 'enculturated to particular practices and paradigms of the body-mind relationship ...' (Ibid: 22), as opposed to the mind-body relationship experienced by practitioners of *Kalarippayattu* and *Kathakali*. He describes his body as having been in a state of tension, where his beliefs and ethical values were separate from his biomedical or sports body, and he thus experienced his body as 'fragmented'. In the 1970's, according to Zarrilli, Artaud, Grotowski, and Barba provided the inspiration for him to take his '... own journey beyond American versions of Stanislavski available to me at the time' (Ibid: 4). This led to Zarrilli training in *kathakali* dance-drama in Kerala, which then led him to one of the source-traditions on which *kathakali* drew, the martial art *kalarippayattu*, which he studied for seven years under a master of the tradition, Gurukkal Govindankutty Nayar.

During Zarrilli's initial training, and encounter with the 'other', he had what might be described as a revelatory moment where he was instructed to use his 'whole body', and thus discovered, in his terms, that 'engaging the whole body means working with a fully awakened energy coursing through one's entire bodymind. One's awareness is so fully open that one is totally focussed within a specific action' (Ibid). Zarrilli describes his initial engagement and understanding of *kalarippayattu* in terms of a process of shedding his fragmented experience of his western American body, and learning, over years of practice, how to alter his body-mind relationship. Leaving aside questions of the problematical nature of discussing the self in terms of a 'body' and a 'mind'<sup>35</sup> (I return to such questions in Chapter Four), what I am highlighting here is Zarrilli's

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<sup>35</sup>I would propose that while 'body' has materiality, 'mind' is wholly metaphoric.

account of his transformative experience with the ‘other’, and the sense that he is only able to approach his own body and body-training through what are patently other-than-western paradigms and practices.

During the workshop ‘Making the Body All Eyes: Psychophysical Process through Asian Martial/Meditation Arts’<sup>36</sup>, a group of practitioners, including myself, were introduced to key concepts that inform Zarrilli’s use of breathing patterns and principles from yoga, *kalaripayattu*, and *t’ai chi ch’uan*; we worked with structured improvisations, through which the principles of the training were applied. During the workshop, Zarrilli taught the techniques with rigor and depth; exercises and specific sequences were repeated, broken down, and conveyed in fine detail.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc Two, Phillip Zarrilli ‘Making the Body All Eyes’ Workshop: ‘T’ai chi ch’uan’ and ‘Kalaripayattu’']**

Zarrilli spoke in detail about the application of such training to the performer body, and what it might offer in terms of realising and attuning the performer’s energy and presence. Some notions that Zarrilli spoke of, such as transformation or focusing on the centre of the body in terms of physical engagement and energy, were familiar, as I have found similar notions with Kaitaisha and in *butoh*. Zarrilli led us in applying the principles from the training in Asian meditation and martial arts to performer-training exercises; the aim of these was to achieve performer presence; he instructed us, for example, on how to move forwards across the space from an original position seated on a chair.

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<sup>36</sup> The beginner’s intensive workshop took place over 5 days in July 2010.



[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc Two, Phillip Zarrilli  
‘Making the Body All Eyes’ Workshop:  
‘Structured Improvisation’]

Within these specific exercises, I felt inhibited, too aware of my body and the technical demands made of it. Undoubtedly, within the context of a 5-day workshop, there are limitations on what one can achieve. As I suggest above, what lingers post-workshop is a sense of unease. Clearly, there is a certain irony, at least, inherent in training in such culturally-specific practices with an American-born visionary whose desire for otherness is clear, in a former milking parlour converted into a kalari studio in rural west Wales. The packed earth floor, which in Kerala would soak up the sweat of those practicing *kalarippayattu*, is cool under the foot, and the view reveals cows grazing, rain, and the distant Irish Sea. I would suggest that my sense of unease emerges from this awkward hybridisation of practice, and from both admiration for Zarrilli, and frustration with the impossibility of achieving what he demands. The studio is set up to replicate a traditional kalari, and I am instructed to enter the space with my right foot first, then touch the floor, my head, and my chest; and repeat this action to each of the three candles in the space. Incense burns, and Zarrilli’s stool of mastery (that had been presented to him in India) is in the corner, along with flower petals, and pictures of ‘deities’ in an alcove. Although Zarrilli asserts that we are working with technique, as opposed to the ‘mystic’, working in such a ritualised space, and the respect that it demands, gives *gravitas* to the training, and creates the sense, for me, of Zarrilli as ‘master’. During the workshop, combined with this atmosphere of respect, was a sense of pleasure and satisfaction, gained from working intensively in a tranquil and welcoming environment with international practitioners. As I arrived each day, the long wooded lane led me to a sealed environment in which I could fully engage myself in the physical training, and I left with a certain sense of satisfaction.

Retrospectively, post-workshop, I become aware of both an unease and an emptiness in terms of what I might have gained as a performer. What Zarrilli has been able to do is *demonstrate* a particular practice, yet I cannot fully gain an understanding of it, for it is

an expert practice, which demands time as well as developmental stages to embody. Of course, Zarrilli has framed this workshop as an introduction to these practices, and as such, he does not have expectations of participants mastering the techniques<sup>37</sup>. Yet, in my view, these techniques are embedded *in* time, in the sense that one cannot understand them in any meaningful way unless one practices them over time, which then allows a gradual transformation of the body. Thus, as a participant in the workshop, I can only engage in a superficial borrowing of these techniques and they are merely forms that I embody. For example, when I repeatedly practice the ‘Lion pose’ I am not able to achieve a momentary stasis, as is achieved by a master of *kalaripayattu*, Gurukkal Govindankutty Nayar, behind which, as Zarrilli describes, is a ‘... palpable inner fullness reflected in his concentrated gaze and in his readiness to respond – animal-like – to anything that might happen in the immediate environment’ (Ibid: 24). I might, through my own performer-expertise, be able to recognise the state that Zarrilli is aiming for through the demonstration of this technique, where the ‘body becomes all eyes’ and is at the ‘... optimal state of readiness that the actor ideally inhabits’ (Ibid), but I cannot achieve it.

This sense of the unachievable, for me, goes beyond what one can or cannot accomplish over time in such practices. Zarrilli appears to be engaged in the classical mind/body conundrum, characterised by opposed terms and the primary term/secondary term word order, which he is trying to overcome through modes of practice. As a participant, I am also working within this philosophical and linguistic conundrum, rooted in modern English, which recognises and affirms the divorce of body from mind. If then, this divide is built into me to such an extent that I naturalise the implications of this linguistic divide, then by definition, I can only feel discomforted by the workshop process. I cannot resolve Zarrilli’s dilemma for him, and I would suggest that there is a relational dynamics at play here where I cannot give him what he wants from me as a participant, because he has not given me what I need in order to give him back what he requires. In the workshop, the mode of communication is primarily linguistic, and it necessarily articulates ancient philosophical conundrums, yet there is a desire for something *other*. I would suggest that Zarrilli is engaged in a process where he is at odds with himself, with philosophy, and with his own language; and where he is trying

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<sup>37</sup>Zarrilli offers further training, which is attended by practitioners who have engaged with his version of *kalaripayattu* for many years, and are at an advanced stage in their practice.

to train performers to achieve (or to want to achieve) his own idealised goal, the experience of training where he becomes other, yet he cannot offer this to me as a participant. Hence, the individual unease that I experienced post-workshop, is rather a philosophical crisis that I am embedded in, whereby, in these terms, Zarrilli is asking for the impossible. Whilst Zarrilli considers questions in the workshop such as whether it might be possible to unlearn cultural influences and embodied behaviour (referencing in particular his high school football training), I would suggest that such questions are impossible to consider whilst he is thinking in terms of the mind-body dualism which is necessarily present in a psychophysical approach. Thus, the framework that he employs in order to find an answer to this problem is unsatisfactory, as the very problem that he seeks to find an answer to is a consequence of employing this framework.

The unease that I experienced during Zarrilli's workshop enabled me to reflect on my own desire for 'otherness' within my collaborative work with Kaitaisha, principally in terms of how I embody their practice. In particular, my reflection on the workshop enabled me to question assumptions that I had made regarding my approach and understanding of the teaching and transmission of specific techniques that I engaged with prior to the Zarrilli workshop during the SMU project. As I discuss in Chapter Two, during the SMU project I assumed that I would be able to transmit particular techniques to the project participants, and that they would be able to embody them, however, it became clear through reflection on the SMU project and on my own participation in Zarrilli's workshop that I was only able to *demonstrate* an expert practice to the participants, and that they required time in order to undergo the gradual transformation that is required to embody such practices. During the SMU project I was engaged in an approach similar to Zarrilli, where I was training performers to reach my own idealized goal, something that was clearly unachievable.

### **Homi Bhabha: Cultural hybridisation**

At this point I propose to turn briefly to the post-colonial writer Homi Bhabha, as he provides a complex theory of cultural hybridisation that is useful to draw upon in relation to both the ambiguity of Barba and Zarrilli's projects, and my own project. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha attempts to disclose the contradiction inherent in colonial discourse in order to highlight the coloniser's ambivalence in terms of their



position towards the colonised other. Drawing on literature and contemporary art, Bhabha's analysis mainly employs the Lacanian notion of mimicry as camouflage. He describes the discourse of post-Enlightenment English colonialism as often speaking in '... a tongue that is forked, not false' (Bhabha, 1994: 122), and describes mimetic representation as '... one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge' (Ibid). Bhabha notes that mimicry '*repeats* rather than *re-presents*' (author's emphasis) (Ibid: 125), and that through this repetition the original is lost, and only a second-hand trace remains. This concept of mimicry is relevant in light of Barba and Zarrilli's use of specific practices, but what is of particular interest to me, as Rajan Balachandra points out in his review of *The Location of Culture*, is the notion that the leakages and reabsorptions that Bhabha detects in his theory of hybridity can '...combine in a double process of imitative resistance - the other's resistance as mimicry, and the self's resistance to its own act of polarization via the trace of the other which it cannot erase from itself' (Balachandra, 1998). This notion of the self as unable to erase the trace of the other is striking, particularly in relation to Heidegger's notion of transformation of self, and I propose to revisit this notion in what follows.

Bhabha argues that critical theory '...often engages with texts within the familiar traditions and conditions of colonial anthropology either to universalise their meaning within its own cultural and academic discourse, or to sharpen its internal critique of the Western logocentric sign ...' (Bhabha, 1994: 45). In light of Barba's 'Theatre Anthropology', Bhabha's critique of 'Western' critical theory is highly relevant, as he goes on to argue that within this, the 'site of cultural difference can become the mere phantom of a dire disciplinary struggle in which it has no space or power' (Ibid: 46). He draws on several examples, including Barthes's Japan<sup>38</sup>, which he says is '... part of this strategy of containment where the Other text is forever the exegetical horizon of difference, never the active agent of articulation. The Other is cited, quoted, framed, illuminated, encased in the shot/reverse-shot strategy of a serial enlightenment' (Ibid). Thus, in these terms, Barba and Zarrilli's 'other' always remains submissive and contained, with no power to signify, or indeed to transform those that engage with the 'other'. Bhabha argues that however anti-ethnocentrically the other is represented, it will always remain as the '... good object of knowledge, the docile body of difference

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<sup>38</sup> I discuss Barthes's Japan in the Chapter Three, 'On a Lesson in Writing (from Barthes)'.

...' (Ibid). In such a framework, we thus require an alternative model in which transcultural relations can be located, and I suggest that this can be found in Bhabha's notion of in-betweenness. In the introduction to his text, Bhabha states that:

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (Ibid: 2)

It is within such in-between spaces and innovative sites of collaboration that Bhabha suggests the most interrogative forms of culture are produced, situated in disjunctions of class, race, gender, nation, and location. He goes on to ask: 'How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)?' (Ibid). This notion of the in-between moves us beyond Barba and Zarrilli's fixed and conflicted notions of self, and towards a self that is located in temporal and spatial dislocation, in the in-between, and in a space of the untranslatable. Bhabha's notion of the in-between is set against what he describes as the '... dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures' (Ibid: 13), and this again calls into question Barba's representation of certain performance traditions. This in-between space can be discussed in terms of Bhabha's 'Third Space of enunciation', which constitutes the '... discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew' (Ibid: 55). Thus, in this space, culture shifts from a particular group, allowing for the invention of a hybrid identity that permits interacting groups to participate in a common identity that forms in a shared space and common dialogue. Such a notion moves us away from problematic binarisms that frame Barba's conception of culture. Bhabha argues that the theoretical recognition of this third space may:

open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space – that carries the burden of meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves'. (Ibid: 56)

I propose to argue here that within my collaborations with Kaitaisha, I am operating in a space that, although it may not be devoid of fixity or cultural assumptions, may, perhaps, in part, be defined in terms of Bhabha's third space. In later chapters, I discuss the complex negotiations that are played out within the transcultural collaborative processes as I work with Kaitaisha, arguing that these might begin to allow the creation of such a space in-between. This 'in-between' space, I argue, allows, in Heidegger's terms (as rearticulated by Milet), those within it to endure, suffer and submit to an experience of transformation where the self is split and divided, with the potential to 'become other' to its self. Within my collaborations with Kaitaisha, that is to say, I do not seek to contain or mimic the 'other', and nor is it asked of me; new subjects are formed in a transformative process that takes place through an exchange as expert performers. Within these exchanges I regard our 'expert performer selves' to be in a process of continuous development that form new and shifting identities operating in a temporary shared space of common dialogue.

### ***Theoria* operating in the in-between**

I briefly conclude this chapter by locating my own project as post-Barba and Zarrilli's projects, whereby I operate in a historical and theoretical framework that attempts to engage with 'otherness' in a way that does not mimic and incorporate, but which creates an exchange that critically opens up my own identity and allows me to undergo the possibility of a transformation of self that is central to my performer-self, but that I can only realise retrospectively. I view my position as being similar to Ulmer's notion of the *theoria* (Ulmer, 1994), hence, a theoretician in his terms. In *Heuretics*, Ulmer locates the first theorists as tourists, specifically drawing on Solon as the first theorist in Western history (Ibid: 120), the Greek sage whose political reforms, around 590BC, renewed the city of Athens. Ulmer states that originally *theoria* meant seeing the sights for yourself, and receiving a worldview; but also, importantly, that the term implied a complex mode of active observation that included asking questions, listening to stories and local myths, and *feeling*, in addition to hearing and seeing, and that would be followed, vitally, by passing on an account of that concrete experience to an other – that is, retrospectively. *Theoria* thus encouraged an open reception to every kind of

emotional, cognitive, symbolic, imaginative, and sensory experience (Ibid: 121). I propose similarly to view Kaitaisha as tourist-theoreticians, as they selected international performers to continue their collaborations with them (in Tokyo) during their collaborative projects outside of Japan. This collaborative work with Kaitaisha seems to me to take place – or to have the potential to take place - in Bhabha's in-between space, where a mutual exchange of otherness occurs. As I propose to set out in some detail in what follows, I would argue that within this complex scene, I am desired - as performer; I am called forth and 'imported', and I am 'remapped', as Other by the Other, in a complex set of relations that might function, for those involved, including potential onlookers, in Bhabha's third space.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Accounting for Embodied Knowledge and for Practice as a Mode of Enquiry

**Case study: Memopia Theatre Project ‘Of the Sea’; teaching performer-training techniques at Swansea Metropolitan University (2010)**



Figure 28: *Of the Sea* in performance, Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, May 2010. Left to right, Joanne Harries and Chloe Freeman-Oakley, photo Emma-Louise Henson.

In this chapter, I frame my use of performance-making practices and documentation as a mode of advanced enquiry through asking to what extent performance practices, in a given disciplinary field, can provide insights into the theorisation of performance that cannot be obtained through more traditional research practices. I address this question, and frame my practice-as-research approach, through using an account of the Memopia Theatre project *Of the Sea* (Swansea Metropolitan University, 19<sup>th</sup> April to the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010), as a case study. Through drawing on this initial PaR project, as the first of five PaR projects throughout this inquiry, I demonstrate the constantly evolving nature of the research as it engages with the continuously unfolding nature of performance-processes. It is important to note then, that the research questions that I originally engaged with on this initial project become subject to scrutiny as the project progresses, and thus mark a shift in the focus of my research. In research terms, the SMU project aimed to explore how the hybridised ‘Asian’ performer-training techniques that I am engaged with can be translated, taught, understood, and embodied by the ‘European’ performer. I wanted to question whether such training can exist outside of the cultural framework of Japan and, if so, how one can use such techniques to develop performer consciousness and physical ‘mastery’. More generally, I was addressing questions of how the processes of production and the performance product are defined by directors’ and performers’ ‘expert intuition’. As I illustrate through this and following chapters, the process of PaR offers a constant feedback loop that thus transforms both the practice and the research itself. Consequently, the initial set of research questions that I grappled with as I embarked on the SMU project (and the PhD inquiry itself) were transformed by the ongoing feedback process; indeed, the research questions continuously become and unfold within the process itself, as I illustrate throughout my inquiry.

A key question with regards to practice as a mode of enquiry is how one begins to account for it. If I start with the material remains, I am left with the performance documents: still images; training, rehearsal and performance film footage and sound recordings; pages of notes, schedules, plans, sketches; programmes; performer feedback; audience comments; scripts; and my own reflections. From the debris of such documents, I might select an image, such as the image seen above, that acts as a kind of

hypotyposis<sup>39</sup>, a vivid sketch that allows an economical representation of an idea, and initiates the evocation of a complex experience for the viewer to unfold. Such an image creates a mediated illusion of reality for the viewer. Yet this image or artefact, and in the same way the performance-product itself, is just one element of the larger picture. If I look at the non-material ‘remains’ I might identify the infinite exchanges between participants in the project, which I have engaged with and anticipate continuing, and which arguably result in development of an embodied knowledge that resists the logic of documentation in one medium or another.

When writing about ‘archive fever’, practice-as-research, and documentation, Angela Piccini and Caroline Rye suggest that ‘much of the anxiety around practice-as-research may be traced to the foundational problem of where knowledges are located and how they are communicated via art-practices’ (Piccini and Rye, 2009: 36). As documented by the long-established PARIP project, and widely debated, discussed, and published within and by the academy, there are complex creative-academic issues raised by practice as research (PaR). PARIP (Practice as Research in Performance) was a five-year project directed by Professor Baz Kershaw and the Department of Drama: Theatre, Film, Television at the University of Bristol, and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (2001 – 2006). The context of the project is described on the (archived) website:

The pursuit of practice as research/practice-based research (PAR/PBR) has become increasingly important during the past ten years to the research cultures of the performing arts (drama, theatre, dance, music) and related disciplines involving performance media (film, video, television, radio) as the contribution of the arts and cultural industries to national health and prosperity has climbed up the political agenda. A growing number of performing arts/media departments in higher education are now offering higher degrees which place practice at the heart of their research programmes. This represents a major theoretical and methodological shift in the performance disciplines — traditional approaches to the study of these arts are complemented and extended by research pursued through the practice of them.

(University of Bristol Department of Drama: Theatre, Film, Television, and the Arts and Humanities Research Board: 2001 – 2006, PARIP: online)

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<sup>39</sup> I am drawing on Susan Melrose’s use of Immanuel Kant’s hypotyposis (as outlined in Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, 2007), where, in symbolic hypotyposis, a rule is brought to an intuition, which enables the transfer of reflection on an object of intuition to a different concept entirely (Melrose, 2005a).



The PARIP project and the wider PaR debate raises questions of how to account for embodied knowledge and for practice as a mode of enquiry. Of particular relevance to this written document is the question of the nature of academic writing as a major mode of documentation of and enquiry into research practices (as discussed by Melrose in “...just intuitive...”, 2005b)<sup>40</sup>. I intend to illustrate the complexities of these questions through discussing the SMU project in detail.

### **The Research Project – A Case Study**

The principal aim of the project was to teach performer-training techniques over a period of five weeks to third year undergraduate students in the Performing Arts department at SMU, within the framework of devising and directing a production. The university commissioned the project to give the students the experience of working with professional practitioners. My intention was to use the techniques of Kaitaisha and of butoh dance, which I have absorbed into my own practice, alongside other physical and vocal training techniques and practices. I focussed specifically on the performer’s physical engagement with their own body, with the other performers, and with the performance space.

Cherry Franklin and I led the teaching and performance project; we had, at the time of the project, been working together for three years on a collaborative basis as Memopia Theatre. In general, Franklin leads the vocal work and I lead the physical work, however this can be interchanged as we have an in-depth and detailed understanding of each other’s techniques and teaching methods. Within this project, where we were working in a teaching context, our respective roles tended to be more flexible as we demonstrated techniques. I alone set up and undertook the project as a research exercise, however, the research questions are of interest to both of us as a company, and helped to frame our approach to the teaching. I sought permission from the students, who signed consent forms, and were given a full explanation of the project aims. Their participation

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<sup>40</sup> In “...just intuitive...” (2005b) Melrose argues that a key issue in higher degree performance-as-research projects is the nature of academic writing as a major mode of 'documentation' of research practices, and she questions how those engaged in such performance-as-research projects who are trained in performance-making rather than writing-productive practices might master research-writing registers.

and engagement was defined, in my view, by their role as undergraduate students (as opposed to professional practitioners) and by the university context, wherein they were used to receiving instruction and to engaging with each other and the work in a particular way. There was a clear power-dynamic in the studio, where I was regarded as a teacher, as opposed to fellow artist, and where the students had an expectation of being taught and led through the process. The students had a clearly ingrained set of habits and a view of themselves reflecting what they believed they were capable of, or more importantly of what they were not; this had to be ‘unlearned’ to an extent in order for us to work together effectively. My documentation of the project involved filming training sessions, rehearsals, and the performances; keeping a log of notes throughout the process; and asking the participants to complete feedback forms that enquired into their responses to the training.

I outlined the research processes in advance of the project and Franklin and I agreed upon a set of objectives that we planned to focus on each week. The first week was focussed on teaching performer training techniques; the second week on teaching specific methods that would generate performance material; the third week on developing this performance material and deciding on the structural composition of the piece; the fourth week on rehearsing the complete performance with the technical elements involved, and the fifth week was the production week. Clearly, the processes were subject to time constraints and the logistical factors involved in working towards a production deadline, such as the technical demands of production. The limited four-week rehearsal process meant that we were under similar constraints that I discussed in Chapter One in relation to the Zarrilli workshop, where we did not have the length of time required to enable participants to undergo a gradual transformation in terms of embodying the practices they engaged with. The processes were also shaped on a moment-by-moment basis as I made ‘expert-intuitive’<sup>41</sup> judgements in response to the students’ reactions to the techniques; or my response to seeing the techniques ‘in action’; or the discussions or questions that emerged from the work. We had to revise the project based on interim outcomes; for example, we had not accounted for the

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<sup>41</sup> Melrose points out that when these judgements are ‘expert’, they take into account the practitioner’s learned and tested experiences of performance-making that ‘works’; these judgements modulate the intuitive processes, which as a result can no longer be described, by those involved, as ‘just intuitive’.

limitations that came with a mixed and low ability group, and we therefore had to adjust the amount of time needed to cover basic techniques and work within the finite resources of the group. The students had a wide range of skills, energies, desires, and understandings of the process and we had to accommodate all these elements within what we wanted to achieve.

### **Practice as Research Complexities**

Within the project, I discovered that my role was a complex one as it included that of researcher, teacher, demonstrator-performer, director, deviser, choreographer, and writer. I worked through these roles whilst negotiating the complex collaborative relationship between Franklin and myself, and between the students and myself. I worked within these complexities and time constraints to achieve research outcomes, to train and teach the students, and to stage an original performance that utilised the skills of each individual performer. My role was physically demanding, as I used myself as the bar against which the students could measure themselves in terms of both energy and focus within the training. I discovered that absorbed by these multiple roles and project aims it was not possible to think solely as a ‘researcher’, rather I was working within the moment as a practitioner-researcher, relying on practitioner intuition<sup>42</sup>. It was impossible to physically step aside and objectively look at the project; I was constantly immersed, and modifying the process each evening as we planned for the next day’s work. Such an intuitive process is ongoing and continually unfolding; for example, as I look over the footage and reflect on the work, I rely on my expert intuition to make new observations, whilst also being aware of the distorting effect of the camera.

Within the training process, difficulties presented themselves in terms of working with students as opposed to professional practitioners. This presented advantages because as the students had not yet developed their own training methods and the approach was entirely new to them they were receptive to the process. However, this also presented

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<sup>42</sup> I use the term ‘intuition’ to signify the act of knowing or sensing something without the use of rationalizing processes. My use of ‘practitioner intuition’ relates to Melrose’s use of the ‘expert intuitive’ (above), where she describes expert-intuitive operations as playing a significant role in expert or professional performance-making, and where the logics of production modulate what is made available by the expert-intuitive operations (Melrose, 2007).

difficulties as initially not all the students recognised the need to develop an approach to training, and seemed to feel that they could ‘just make work’. Their student-practitioner, as opposed to expert or professional practitioner mentality, meant that they did not have as disciplined an approach to the work; absence and the loss of focus was an issue that meant that I also had to adopt the role of disciplinarian, adding further complexities to my multiple-roles. A number of the techniques that we were working with required a degree of physical strength and technical ability that some of the students had not developed, so we had to adapt our approach and spend a great deal of time physically training them.

In addition, we had to spend a significant amount of time working on the students’ focus and understanding before being able to work on anything in-depth. For example, the students seemed initially unable to understand what was meant by the concept ‘stillness’; this was a challenge as this concept, in the performer, is integral to some of the training methods we were working with. In the same way, the participants struggled with the concept of connecting with one another as a ‘pack’<sup>43</sup> and with understanding the notion of listening to one another.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc Two, Swansea Metropolitan University *Of the Sea* Project: ‘Pack Exercise & Walking/Image Exercise’]**

Difficulties such as these present an interesting reflection on my own understanding of the techniques, and the realisation that my understanding of the physicality and philosophy of Kaitaisha and butoh has been a slow and ‘invisible’ process that demands

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<sup>43</sup>The ‘pack’ is a way of moving that is employed by Kaitaisha as ‘*murekehai*’ (see page 180); in the SMU project we were working with both the Kaitaisha notion of the ‘pack’ and an understanding of the pack (as drawn from various sources) where the breath, speed, rhythm and physicality is mutually decided by the pack as a whole, rather than by individual performers. This way of working was demanding and required a high level of focus from the participants.

time, reflection, and practice to understand and to embody in a wholly different context. The concepts informing many of the techniques were so alien to the participants that we had to participate alongside them in the physical work in order to demonstrate what we were looking for in terms of actions. This was opposed to giving them precise physical instructions (in the form of propositions) which we found to be inadequate, as this kind of practical work relies on being ‘sensed’ or ‘felt’ on an individual basis. One of the techniques that we were working with was ‘butoh fu’: this involves being physically ‘transformed’ through engaging with an image, as discussed in detail on page 162. The participants struggled with the idea that they were transforming into the image, or that it was transforming them, as opposed to ‘acting’ an image from the ‘outside’. The work on image was challenging to the extent that the butoh fu image was not available to the students from ‘within’; it challenged their sense of control of self-presentation, meaning that if their ‘sense of self’ is self-regarding in this way, there is no space for an alternative image.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc Two, Swansea Metropolitan University *Of the Sea* Project: ‘Sequence from Butoh Fu Work’’]**

Clearly the requirement for the participants to have a ‘sensed’ understanding of the work, as opposed to relying on either verbal instruction from Franklin or myself, draws certain parallels with my experience of Zarrilli’s workshop, where Zarrilli’s reliance on verbal instruction emphasised the body-mind dualism that I sensed he was grappling with. I would suggest that my training in certain practices with Kaitaisha, where language, of necessity, was not the primary mode of communication, fostered in me a sensed and embodied understanding of such practices, and that my transmission of these practices in the SMU project required a likewise linguistically minimal approach.

The participants’ struggle with these concepts indicates, on reflection, that focus, stillness, and listening need to be understood, embodied and practiced as techniques in

themselves on a very basic level before one can embark on applying them technically. I was teaching the students a particular approach to discipline itself, which, I had assumed, would be understood by and accessible to them; but as I have illustrated, it was difficult for them to both understand and embody. Clearly, this difficulty stems in part from the fact that the students are beginners in terms of their understanding of such approaches to practice. However, it is worth noting here that new Kaitaisha members who I have observed who were of a similar age to the students, and who had little or no experience in performance, appeared to engage and understand the concepts of focus and stillness more readily than the students participating in the SMU project. Such a complexity relates to my original research question, which asked whether it is possible to understand a complex disciplinary-specific training system (such as I practise with Kaitaisha) outside of the cultural framework of Japan. A question such as this moves beyond the framework of actor training and poses much broader cultural and philosophical questions; for example, whether the participants' struggle with the notion of placing images 'inside a blank body' is particular to their cultural identity. I would suggest here that the notion of stillness is at least partially culturally encoded and is not a unitary concept; for example, from my own experience stillness in classical ballet and stillness in butoh are differently produced and experienced by the dancer.

It is clear that the original research questions that I considered, as I began the SMU project, are problematic in certain respects, and particularly in the terms that I highlighted in Chapter One. The notion that I am able to transmit a training experience (with Kaitaisha) relates to the impossibility of the task that Zarrilli engages with as he tries to train performers in terms of his own idealised goal (the experience of training where he became Other), in that my own attempts to transmit such training will also always 'fail' as I can only regard such techniques in terms of my idealised Kaitaisha embodiment of them. As I am attempting to argue through this chapter, the means of engaging with such questions, through practice, reveal the problematic nature of such questions. I would argue that Kaitaisha's practice is firmly rooted in a particular context, whereby the very terms that they use to describe the action cannot be separated from their cultural and linguistic milieu. My sense (as I understand it, through preceding PaR projects) is that my 'training' with Kaitaisha is as much to do with forming a deep and complex understanding of the concepts that they work with and experiencing the context that they operate in (Tokyo), as opposed to a specific physical training as such. I

could argue here that any attempt, by me, to train other performers (outside of Japan) in such techniques would be futile, since performers I might train may only be able to acquire an empty form. For example, a typical instruction given to a performer by Shimizu or Hino might be ‘when you put the chair down, receive the atmosphere from the chair; that atmosphere makes you sit down’<sup>44</sup>. Such an instruction might appear to someone outside of the Kaitaisha process to be obscure, however, given such an instruction I am immediately able to grasp its intention; on this basis the instruction received can be seen, by an initiate, to be overlaid or threaded through with particular references which specifically relate to the language and concepts that Kaitaisha employ to frame their practice. The performer thereby perceives the chair not simply as a material object that is separate from them, but as an extension of their self and of the space.

What, then, can I transmit post-Kaitaisha collaborations, and how can I account for such training. To digress momentarily from the SMU project, I propose to highlight this point through drawing on my collaborative PaR practice with (trained dancer/performer) Noyale Colin, where I experienced just such a problematic as I attempted to transmit to her these sorts of Kaitaisha techniques. Although Kaitaisha’s training was translatable in a technical sense, I struggled to convey (and Colin struggled to understand) the intention informing such apparently obscure instructions (as described above). I would suggest that over the duration of my practice with Kaitaisha we have developed a particular way of communicating that relies on a limited verbal and extensive physical vocabulary, and that the understanding of their training is rooted in these complex ‘codes’ of communication; such a means of communication is perhaps true of all theatre groups, and groups in general. In my view, my experience with Kaitaisha goes beyond ‘training’ as such, and can more closely be defined in terms of a transformation of the self, as I discuss in further chapters. In the context of the SMU project, the question of both my own and the participants’ potential transformation is relevant to address. As I have noted, during the project, I continually moved between multiple roles, or multiple aspects of self, and this constant requirement to undergo a superficial transformation perhaps compromised my ability to form the relationship with them that would have enabled their own transformation. I describe this

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<sup>44</sup>I recorded this particular direction in my working notebook, February 2012, Tokyo.



transformation as superficial because, in my view, the time limitations of the project did not allow for the kind of transformation that I experienced through my collaborations with Kaitaisha (which I discuss in later chapters) to take place.



Figure 29: Embodying butoh fu imagery, *Of the Sea* in performance, Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, May 2010; the cast, photo Emma-Louise Henson.

Although some aspects of the difficulties I have described in the SMU project reflect pedagogical issues, I can still not dismiss such issues, as they remain implicit to the research questions themselves, where I am questioning the teaching of certain techniques. Such pedagogical difficulties, along with difficulties of the multiple roles of the researcher, time constraints, and the impossibility of gaining ‘distance’ whilst one is inside the project are relevant when it comes to discussing how the constraints of the project affect the project’s outcomes. I entered the research process with a set of questions, and an expectation of gaining direct insight into these questions. However, once I had entered the project, it became clear that any ‘outcome’ was utterly dependent on the constraints of the project, such as the individual participants’ ability to respond to the work; my skills as a teacher and director; or the pressures imposed by the performance deadline. Once I considered this complex set of conditions, and fed them

into my unfolding response to the project, I was able to reflect on insights that I have gained into the original research questions, and tentatively draw the conclusion that these insights are an embodied form of knowledge that perhaps resist the logical textual *turn* of explanation and analysis. From this observation a new set of questions emerges: whether and how one can account for such knowledge in written discourse, and what might be the nature and extent of PaR's contribution to knowledge in general terms. The PaR position does have epistemic implications, in that it assumes that art practice itself might be a mode of philosophical enquiry into knowledge, in contrast with a philosophical tradition that continues to take writing in particular registers as the norm. As I will go on to discuss, the epistemic issue of knowledge-practices and what these take to be their object is highlighted by Karin Knorr Cetina (Knorr Cetina, 2001), who addresses the issue of how to theorise and characterise practice, and acknowledges the particularities of research whose definition of things is looped through the objects themselves. She asserts that this creates dissociation between self and work object (Ibid: 175), and poses the question of how we can conceive of practice in a way that accommodates this dissociation.

In 'Art as action or art as object? The embodiment of knowledge in practice as research' (Pakes 2004) Anna Pakes discusses philosophical accounts of practical knowledge in order to shed light on the epistemological distinctiveness of PaR. She draws on David Carr's examination of Aristotle's notion of *techne* (the skill of craftsmanship) and *phronesis* (the practical wisdom of acting well within the social and moral domains), and their potential for identifying the nature of artistic insight (Ibid). *Techne* is understood here to mean a technique, or the rational method involved in producing something (and plainly here Milet on technics and/of the self comes back to mind (page 60)), and *phronesis* is understood to mean practical thought. The Oxford English dictionary defines *phronesis* as 'thinking, understanding, intelligence, perception, practical sense, etc., to think, be in one's senses, etc. Understanding, practical judgement' (Simpson & Weiner, 1989: 735). Pakes elaborates upon these definitions:

Where *techne* is a form of skill that can be exploited instrumentally to achieve pre-conceived ends, *phronesis* is more of a disposition to laudable action, grounded in sensitivity to particular situations and circumstances. Where the exercise of *techne* may involve theoretical understanding based on general laws and knowledge of causal connections, *phronesis* eschews generalisation, objective detachment and instrumentality. *Phronesis* is a capacity to respond to the particularities of experience, and to evolving relationships with others,

which for Aristotle both enables and flows from the human being's living well within the polis. *Phronesis* is thus associated for Aristotle with the domain of *praxis* (social action) rather than *poesis* (making); but Carr's argument is that contemporary art making both depends upon and has the potential to develop a form of phronetic insight. Even if the action of the artist is a poetic production of art works or objects, her processes also involve a sensitivity to materials and the evolving situation more akin to practical wisdom than to mere technical competence. (Pakes, 2004)

In this understanding, phronetic insight could be a useful way of thinking about the mode of working in the SMU project, whereby a high sensitivity and a practical wisdom were required for the way in which we worked with the materials, including the students, within a constantly evolving and unfolding situation. As Carr emphasises:

Hence, in the first place, artistic endeavour is – like moral conduct – a form of engagement which is focused on *practice* more than theory; just as the business of acquiring moral understanding or knowledge is largely a matter of coming to know *how* to act appropriately – either potentially or actually – so the acquisition of artistic understanding or knowledge is also largely a matter of acquiring certain *practical* dispositions. (Carr, 1999: 250-1)

Pakes applies this definition of phronesis to practice as research by ‘characterising its epistemological mode as phronetic rather than either technical or theoretical’ (Pakes, 2004). She identifies creative work as often being collaborative and as evolving in its nature, where:

... decisions are not generally made in accordance with a technically rational view of how to achieve a pre-conceived effect. Rather, they arise out of the circumstances of the moment and are governed by a different, more flexible kind of rationality, sensitive to contingencies ... we might conceive of dance practice as phronetic – that is, bound up with a distinctively practical kind of knowledge ... (Ibid)

Pakes sees the (dance-maker) artist within this kind of phronetic practice as having a ‘reflexive awareness of what she does, and of her relationships with dancers, other collaborators and audience members’ (Ibid) which then allows her to develop ‘a kind of knowledge that is valuable in reflecting on both specifically artistic processes and, more generally, on the nature of social relationships’ (Ibid).

During the SMU project, I would argue that I was developing an understanding of such a phronetic practice, which allowed me to negotiate my complex multiple roles within

the research project, my complex relationship (and the way I interacted) with the research participants, and the complexity of the process itself. This complex negotiation, led by phronetic insight, allowed me to modulate the project intuitively moment-by-moment, according to what emerged from the practice. For example, in one particular scene in the production we asked the female performers to convey a sense of despair as they ‘represented’ the women of Nantucket<sup>45</sup> waiting for their husbands to return from sea. Within this scene we were not aiming for individual representation, rather we were aiming to create a sense of the choric, as opposed to individualised expression, where the performers produced a *sense* of despair - rather than a *state* of despair, through choric modes of action.

As we developed the scene it became clear that the performers were struggling to inhabit this state without resorting to representation. In response to this struggle we asked the female performers to improvise with large sheets of material that we had in the studio, as we sensed that working with the sheets might enable them to achieve a degree of physical release that we felt they were struggling to achieve. During this sensitive process we realised that the other (predominantly male) performers needed to support this improvisation as a chorus in order to alleviate the self-consciousness of the female performers, and so we asked the male performers to improvise vocally in response to the female performers improvisation. Through this improvisation the female performers gradually began to achieve a state of physical release, and the male performers were able to witness this new physicality and respond vocally; this improvisational moment developed in a choreographed scene (see Figure 28 on page 85 with Joanne Harries and Chloe Freeman Oakley). I would suggest that this scene emerged due to our directorial response to the performers’ struggle with achieving a state of physical release, and illustrates our use of phronetic insight in the moment. Such an approach relates to practice theoretician Karin Knorr Cetina’s notion of internally differentiated processes, whereby she describes subject-object differentiation and the changing and unfolding character of the research ‘object’ or subject (Knorr Cetina, 2001), as I discuss in further detail in Chapter Three. I would suggest that within the

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<sup>45</sup>*Of the Sea* told, in part, the story of the maritime disaster of 1819, where a whale ship, The Essex, was rammed and sunk in the middle of the South Pacific by a sperm whale, and of the plight for survival of the twenty crew members.

SMU project I relied on an expert-intuition, a kind of *techné*, which I negotiated, ‘on my feet’, through a phronetic-practice.

As I have illustrated, the way in which the project unfolds is determined by the participants’ responses to the project, and the negotiation of the implications of these responses by the directorial or choreographic leader of the project. If we are to consider the various research models or paradigms that are useful and whose application is effective in the context of PaR, then we might want to consider a number of options made available through the development of qualitative research models.

Action Research offers a model that we can refer to whilst reflecting on issues surrounding participation in PaR. Reason and Bradbury define action research as:

... a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. (Reason and Bradbury, 2006: 1)

In the action research model, participation is a central, if not defining, concern, and importantly one that is characterised in terms of being in flux. As Reason and Bradbury explain:

Action Research is emancipatory, it lends not just to new practical knowledge, but to new abilities to create knowledge. In action research knowledge is a living, evolving process of coming to know rooted in everyday experience; it is a verb rather than a noun. This means action research cannot be programmatic and cannot be defined in terms of hard and fast methods, but is, in Lyotard’s (1979) sense, a work of art. (Ibid: 2)

Participation within the action research model is complex in terms of its dependence upon the strength of the participative relationship. Danielle Arieli and Victor J. Friedman discuss the paradox of participation in action research in an article that attempts to deal with the building of the participative relationship itself (Arieli & Friedman, 2009: 263). They conduct their research through a first-person action research approach involving a relationship between Jewish researchers and a Palestinian Arab non-governmental organisation in Israel, describing the project as failing to live up to their espoused values of participation. They discuss action research as ‘involving a

particular kind of interpersonal relationship that blurs boundaries between traditional roles of researchers and the researched' (Ibid: 264), viewing the research in terms of being *with*, rather than *on* or *for*, people. They describe the participatory action research relationship in terms of having both a functional and a political element, whereby the participants are an active part of a democratic process, sharing decision-making, and interpretation, and where the 'researchers act as committed facilitators, participants, and learners rather than distanced, neutral observers, analysts, or manipulators' (Ibid: 265).

In my view, it would have been difficult to apply such a model to the SMU project, where my primary role was one of teacher. I attempted to engage with participants' responses through the internally modulated processes that I signalled above, and through feedback forms; however, on reflection, if the participants' feedback had a greater presence in the process as it unfolded, they may have had more of an active part in the process. Yet, as Arieli and Friedman go on to discuss, it is relevant to question their attempts at partnership, and the context of their relationship with the participants, in terms of whether it was a democratic relationship. They describe such complexities as this as the paradox of participation (a term borrowed from Ospina et al. (2004)), which they define as '*a situation in which action researchers, acting to actualize participatory and democratic values, unintentionally impose participatory methods upon partners who are either unwilling or unable to act as researchers*' (Arieli & Friedman, 2009: 275; emphasis in original). They go on to identify the values and assumptions underlying this paradox, defining an action-research 'value' as regarding participation as 'good' and 'an essential part of action research' (Ibid: 277), and identifying an action researcher assumption as 'the community is willing to engage in enquiry' (Ibid: 278). They reflect that in their project the 'community members felt neither qualified for nor particularly interested in acting as researchers' (Ibid: 278). The SMU project participants held a similar position to the community members that Arieli and Friedman discuss, in the sense that they, in my opinion, were not particularly interested in acting as researchers, nor were they especially interested in the research itself, their main concern was with the production deadline. Arieli and Friedman go on to describe a 'community assumption' in terms of the community assuming that the researchers have valuable knowledge and resources to provide. As they explain:

The community members valued academia and believed that the researchers could provide them with valuable expertise and resources. They wanted to

benefit from the researchers' expertise and felt that researchers, as experts, should conduct the research. (Ibid: 278)

I would suggest that the participants in the SMU project viewed me as a teacher and an expert practitioner and in addition, as an expert researcher, and this was how I presented the research project to them: I considered myself the researcher and the participants as the 'research'. I would suggest that my relationship with Kaitaisha, in research terms, is differently played out, where, due to my long-standing professional relationship with the company prior to the research project, I regarded them less as research 'subjects' than I did the participants of the SMU project, and more as professional performers and fellow company members, as I discuss in detail in Chapter Three.

### **Research 'Outcomes' in Practice as Research**

As I signal above, I entered the SMU project with a set of research questions that I planned to address, yet, as I discovered, the complexities of the project framework and the project processes determined any potential outcomes, and in my view became the main research 'outcome' within this project. In this sense, I could describe the research processes themselves as determining the new research questions that emerged. However, as suggested in the cyclical model offered by John S. Drummond and Markus Themessl-Huber in 'The cyclical process of action research: The contribution of Gilles Deleuze' (2007), the research process is complex and cyclical; it offers more than a fixed set of 'outcomes'. As Drummond and Themessl-Huber acknowledge, it is impossible to unpack the complexity of Deleuze's work fully in their article (they draw in particular on his *Difference and Repetition* (1994)), hence they refer to the aspects that they see as relevant to their action research model. I propose to refer briefly to their article at this point, as I find it to be helpful to apply their understanding of 'cyclical' action research to my understanding of PaR within the project I have set out. Drummond and Themessl-Huber focus on (their interpretation of) Deleuze's argument that 'all learning is essentially a direct apprentice-type engagement with the problematic nature of the material or project under consideration' (Ibid: 430), and they also seek to:

... connect aspects of Deleuzian philosophy to the cyclical process of action research to show the dynamic relationship between action researcher and an action research project. Our argument is that in doing this, an understanding of



the variables involved in the cyclical process of action research may be enhanced. (Ibid)

In their Deleuzian reading of the cyclical action research model Drummond and Themessl-Huber draw on four aspects of Deleuze's philosophy: 1. the majoritarian and the minoritarian; 2. the relation between problems and solutions; 3. an apprenticeship to signs; and 4. a reciprocal dialectic of continuous becoming (Ibid: 444). Of importance to Drummond and Themessl-Huber's theorisation of the cyclical process of action research is their understanding of Deleuze's account of the actual, in terms of it 'continuously becoming actualized' (Ibid: 434), and his account of the virtual in terms of:

a realm of singularities in varying relations and infinite potentialities ... Thus the return of difference is not merely the return of different possibilities in the relation to the outcome of an event ... When singularities interact in the virtual and differentiate into the actual, something, not just different from before, but also new may emerge; something creative that was not already contained as a possibility ... For Deleuze, this principal applies equally to the whole of life; there is no predetermined limit on what we may become or how we may engage with problems and create events. (Ibid: 437)

I am suggesting that it may be useful to think of PaR in these terms, where there is an actual and a virtual dimension that has infinite potentialities and allows a cyclical research process that does move beyond more linear representations. I would argue that thinking through practice in research terms allows the practitioner to question and renew their practice; clearly, this will not always allow for a positive cyclical research process, and fruitless repetitions may emerge, however I would suggest that within such repetition new elements will issue forth if the researcher is able to acknowledge them as such. Drummond and Themessl-Huber expand on this by drawing on the majoritarian and the minoritarian to make distinctions between that which privileges a fixed identity (majoritarian), and that which is open-ended in its creative forms of becoming (minoritarian). They apply this to the cyclical process by stating that:

the majoritarian relies on the fixed expressions of identity that continue to affirm it ... The minoritarian, however, in the process of an action research project, is imbued with a dimension of creativity that is open to new connections that change the nature of its own becoming. Thus it is not action research as a concept that is minoritarian by definition, or indeed by comparison to more orthodox methods of research, for they may also have their minoritarian moments. It is the so-called cyclical process itself which is *potentially* minoritarian. (Ibid: 438)

As I have indicated above, I entered the research project with a set of research questions, the ‘problem’, and an expectation of a clear research outcome, or ‘solution’. Drummond and Themessl suggest that ‘the process of action research begins not only with a general idea in the positive sense of a desired outcome but rather with the sense of a problem, the Idea of a problem that has both actual and virtual dimensions’ (Ibid: 439). They emphasise that this distinction is an important one, as Deleuze uses the concept of *problems* and *ideas* in a different way:

Neither the problem nor the question is a subjective determination marking a moment of insufficiency in knowledge. Problematic structure is part of objects themselves, allowing them to be grasped as signs, just as the questioning or problematising instance is a part of knowledge allowing its positivity and specificity to be grasped in the act of *learning*. (Deleuze, 1994: 63-4)

Drummond and Themessl go on to describe the Deleuzian ‘problem’ as having both a virtual and an actual side that engages with the problem through ideas or questions. The resulting ‘solution’ has the capacity to ‘change the nature of the problem as a form of knowledge in the return of difference in the dialectic between the virtual and the actual. Thus a problem in Deleuzian terms is always more than a field of possible solutions’ (Drummond and Themessl-Huber, 2007: 440). Hence, the research ‘problem’ itself is *continuously becoming* and unfolding within the cyclical research process.

Drummond and Themessl-Huber state that Deleuze’s apprenticeship to signs carries interrelated elements of meaning, where “Signs” refer to the elements of the unfolding events, both virtual and actual, with which the participants engage as part of their learning ...’ (Ibid: 441), and where ‘apprenticeship’ ‘... refers to the educative aspect of an action research project, or the necessary aspect of learning that must occur in the researchers for the project to progress’ (Ibid). It is relevant to note that Deleuze and Guattari expressed an interest in the semiotics (science of signs) of Charles Peirce (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004), because Peirce’s semiotics, central to his pragmatics, allowed them to focus on the vital notion of the diagram. Such a diagrammatic model allows the tutor-apprentice relation, and the ‘signs’ involved are therefore relationally-determined signs. In Chapter One I discussed my diagrammatic relation to Zarrilli in his workshop, where I was unable to learn as an apprentice, as the ‘signs of his practice’

that Zarrilli made available to me could not be taken up because the relational link was broken, for the reasons I outlined.

Drummond and Themessl-Huber discuss the apprenticeship to signs in terms of firstly embracing a '*necessary participative* engagement with the substance of the project rather than 'bystander' or 'objective observer' status' (Drummond and Themessl-Huber, 2007: 441). Secondly, they discuss an apprenticeship to signs in terms of being feedback rather than results orientated. This continuous feedback loop requires the researcher to 're-study, to think again and, importantly, to give birth to new thought' (Ibid: 442). They describe this approach as being an experimental apprenticeship that requires a sensitivity to signs. In relation to this, and importantly, they point out that individuals within a project are experimenting with themselves as well as with the project itself. Hence, we return to the apprentice-type engagement with the problematic nature of the project itself, where the project is continuously 'becoming' or unfolding in its nature. In this sense, the SMU project allowed me to engage with the research questions that I had already set out, and discover the problematic nature of the questions themselves, where my notion of the translation of techniques makes certain assumptions regarding performer training that employs 'Eastern' techniques (as illustrated in Chapter One); my embodiment of, and ability to transmit, such techniques; 'eastern' and 'western' binaries; the body; and notions of the self (as I discuss in detail in further chapters). The research project as a whole and the research questions I employ thus continually become and unfold as I engage with each PaR project, and, as I discuss in Chapter Five, I am only able to regard this specific PaR retrospectively, through self-transformation, and draw from the constant feedback loop that the PaR offers.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **On a Lesson in Writing (from Barthes): Accounting for process through collaboration with Gekidan Kaitaisha on *With Eternal Revolution* (2010)**

In the account that follows, I discuss my reading of a number of texts in light of Kaitaisha's expert and culturally specific practices, which I engage with from the inside and from the outside as performer-researcher. I employ writing strategies that weave different researcher realities, and attempt to account for my presence in the process. I frame this chapter in terms of, and draw specifically from, Roland Barthes' 'Lesson in Writing' in *Image, Music, Text* (1984/1977) in an attempt to set his project against my own, whereby I consider my own desire for the 'other', or for otherness, in the context of my work with Kaitaisha. In his writing, Barthes identifies a Japan of the (Western) imagination, and a Japan that is rich in signifiers that together articulate their own narrative and their own text, and that reveal Barthes as a westerner desiring the 'orient' (in the terms that I discussed in Chapter One). As I proceed to note in what follows, with the benefit of the sort of hindsight allowed to us by postcolonial theory, we can see that Barthes could not avoid discussing Bunraku (Japanese puppetry) without using his own cultural background as a contrast to it, thus echoing his use of opposition within his text. I question, within this writing and my project, whether such a cultural aspiration is avoidable.

#### **Lesson One: Accounting for Process**

*I sit crouching with my back to the wall in darkness<sup>46</sup>. The air conditioning in this part of the studio stopped working yesterday and my black nylon dress clings to my body, I regret my costume choice. I take picture after picture as silently and with as little movement as possible, my hand shielding the light coming from the camera. Aota looks towards me and I worry that I am breaking her intense focus. She continues. I glance*

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<sup>46</sup> This account is based on my notebook entries and recollection of the rehearsal period with Gekidan Kaitaisha on *With Eternal Revolution*, Tokyo, July – August 2010; it is written after the rehearsal period. I employ this mode of writing in order to attempt to illuminate my sensed and felt experience of the rehearsal period.

*down at the screen on my camera to see the image I have captured, I glance up to the three performers rehearsing before me; the image on my camera is disappointingly flat, grainy, and lifeless in contrast to the moving bodies of the performers. Hino dances across the space with what she would call her 'nervous system', by which, in my view, she means her body is moved through her choreography by the tempo of her own nerves. She moves with a frantic energy (measured against everyday norms); it is as if her body is broken and disjointed one moment and fluid the next. She collapses to the floor, and with a thud raises her body and drops it again; I think of her bruises. Honma stands motionless as he reads from a book. I have been told that the text is from 'Death of the Political Youth' by Ōe Kenzaburō, a novel based on an event that occurred in Japan in 1960 when a 17 year old assassinated the leader of Japan's socialist party and then committed suicide; the author received death threats and the novel was banned in Japan. Hino's frenzied movements continue.*

*My body is poised, hidden in the darkness; I am ready to perform the moment I am called. I recall my text and choreography, and remind myself of my cues, my body spontaneously twitching as I mentally move through my scene. Shimizu says something I do not understand to Honma; he stops his text and Hino stops moving; they continue talking as Kawai<sup>47</sup> enters and moves the floor lights. They change Honma's standing position and his timing for speaking; the adjustment is subtle, barely noticeable. Minute detail is clearly vital. Aota continues moving, without seeming to break her focus. Stood on a stool she performs a sequence called 'Crystal discipline'. I have seen her do this many times before, yet my fascination with the fluidity of her movements remains. I quietly adjust my position, regretting how stiff my body has become since I warmed up. The scene continues. Jon begins to enter with a wooden bench on his back; he has been poised in this position, on the edge of the performing space, for at least an hour. He takes a few steps into the space; Shimizu speaks loudly, sounding frustrated, and Jon pauses. I have an image of myself being physically filled by the actions of the performers in the space; I do not want to sever this connection, I want to remain in the*

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<sup>47</sup> Kawai Naoki is Kaitaisha's lighting technician who, alongside Kawai Ambiru, has collaborated with Kaitaisha for many years and has an intuitive understanding of the lighting required for Kaitaisha's work. Kaitaisha's lighting tends to be dark and minimal, with individual performers carefully lit; the light and its timing in the performance is an important part of the composition and many hours are dedicated to perfecting the lighting during rehearsals.

*moment. It is late and my shoulders are tense. The scene continues; I reluctantly take more photos.*



[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* 2010: ‘Rehearsal Processes’ and ‘Crystal Discipline’]



Figure 30: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Honma Ryoji, Hino Hiruko, and Aota Reiko, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

I am absent from the image itself, yet I framed and captured it. This complexity mirrors my attempt to account for the performance process; I am endeavouring to view the

process from the ‘outside’<sup>48</sup>, and yet the process is framed by my involvement in it. In practice as research terms, I am the perceiving subject documenting my perceptions of the performance process, (hence from a ‘safe’ distance that objectifies) rather than the process itself. In other words, my allegiances and sympathies are divided. The image remains static whereas the process is ongoing as my perceptions during and post performance process are intuitively modulated moment-by-moment according to what emerges. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, in ‘Objectual Practice’ in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (2001), Knorr Cetina’s notion of internally differentiated processes allow her to describe her subject-object differentiation and the changing and unfolding character of the research ‘object’ or subject. My relationship with Kaitaisha (at turns the research ‘object’) is loaded with emotional investment and complexities, as is my role within the research project (as both performer and researcher), and these complex and possibly contradictory relationships define how the research evolves<sup>49</sup>. Knorr Cetina discusses the researcher’s position as affective in its intensity, located within an ‘interlocking structure or chain of wantings’ (Knorr Cetina, 2001:187), which gives some sense to my researcher-practitioner predicament. She goes on to say that ‘the notion of a structure of wanting entails the possibility of a deep emotional investment in objects; an involvement that is at the same time congruent with the many flavours and orientations of this investment’ (Ibid: 187). Through the process of the research project, I am also attempting to unravel my own ‘chain of wantings’ in relation to my perception of Kaitaisha.

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<sup>48</sup> My attempt to view the process from the ‘outside’ relates here to moments in rehearsal when I observed, photographed and filmed members of the company rehearsing scenes that I was not directly involved in. My attempt to view a process that I am immersed in from the outside is clearly problematic, and in relation to this I go on to discuss the problematic binaries of ‘inside’/‘outside’ in detail this Chapter.

<sup>49</sup> Internal differentiation and complexity require of me, as researcher-writer, that I thread an auto-reflexive research-practitioner meta-commentary running through this text, to which I return at key stages. There are clear limitations to the parallels that I draw between my relationship with Kaitaisha, and my dual performer-researcher roles, in the sense that there was a point, prior to our collaborations, when Kaitaisha and I had identities entirely independent of one another; clearly, the same cannot be said of my performer-researcher selves, as these identities cannot be separated in the same way.





Figure 31: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Sugiura Chizuko, Jonathan Giles Garner, Kumamoto Kenjiro, and Ishi Yasuji, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

Within the project, I am acutely aware of the problematic nature of my dual roles as performer and researcher in relation to my performer-director relationship with Shimizu. In order to illustrate and establish this complexity, I shall define this performer-director relationship in terms of Michel de Certeau's notion of belief, which identifies investment, or belief, in the other in terms of a contract or a system of expectations. In 'What We Do When We Believe' in *On Signs*, de Certeau establishes that belief

... occurs between the recognition of an alterity and the establishment of a contract. It disappears if one of the two terms weakens. Belief no longer exists when difference is effaced by a process tending to equalize the partners and give them a mutual mastery of the contract; it no longer exists when difference becomes excessive through a breach of the pact. The oscillation between these poles, in the field of beliefs, makes for a first classification that could go, for example, from fidelity (which gives pride of place to alliance) to faith (which stresses difference). (de Certeau, 1985:192)

De Certeau goes on to say that 'believing takes the form of an interlacing of operations, a combinative of gifts and debts, a network of "recognition"' (Ibid: 193). I view such a

belief-based ‘contract’ as being implicit in my performer-director relationship with Shimizu. Such a contract requires, in de Certeau’s terms, *a belief in the belief of the other*, as he explains:

When belief is directed to a person, it more clearly manifests a displacement that is ultimately to be found in all beliefs and that ends always to seek this surety *further on*. How can we be sure that the partner will *act as obligated*, that he will be “faithful” to what is expected of him, or “straight” as Dumézil said? A first verification: in order to presume its object (the expected thing) believable, belief must also presume that the other, in a certain sense, also “believes” and that he considers himself obligated by the gift given to him. It is a *belief in the belief of the other* or in what he/one makes believe that he believes, etc. A belief *of* the other is the postulate of a belief *in* the other. (Ibid: 200)

As illustrated, the performer-director relationship that I refer to in this project is one that requires the establishment of a contract by both myself (the performer-‘believer’) and by Shimizu (the director-‘other’), within which we both have obligations. De Certeau discusses Greek sacrifices in terms of being a set of ritualised activities that ‘embody the promise or the trust in the objectivity of some gesture’ (Ibid: 196), and I would describe my contract of belief as requiring me to act as such, whereby, I trust Shimizu’s directorial judgement and expertise and thus follow his direction. I do not view such a contract as making me passive or uncritical as a performer, but as a contract that ultimately requires me to believe (in de Certeau’s terms) in Shimizu’s directorial expertise and decision-making. Within this relationship I would suggest that Shimizu’s responsibilities as a director are to engage in a dialogue with the performer, to give them the opportunity to have their own creative input into the work, and ultimately for him to take responsibility for the production. I would argue that exchange is important within the performer-director relationship, and that both performer and director have clear responsibilities towards each other. In previous collaborations with Kaitaisha, I have seen several cases where the contract of belief has failed between the performer and Shimizu, and as a result, the working relationship has broken down, hence the importance of this contract. The issue of power, and potential imbalances of power, is clearly central to the director-performer relationship, and is significant to the question of my ability to be creative and critical as a performer in relation to the director. The complexities around the performer-director relationship that I have illustrated are also clearly relevant in terms of my role as researcher within this project. I intend to attempt

to make a distinction between these two roles, whilst acknowledging that the performer contract of belief is still present in the decisions that I make as a researcher.



Figure 32: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Ishi Yasuji, Hino Hiruko, and Aota Reiko, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

## Lesson Two: The Reflected Image: from Barthes Bunraku to Gekidan Kaitaisha

Antithesis is a privileged figure of our culture, doubtless because it corresponds well to our vision of good and evil and to that inveterate embolism which has us turn every word into a watchword against its opposite (creativity versus intelligence, spontaneity versus reflection, truth versus appearance, etc.). Bunraku cares nothing for these contraries, for this antonymy that regulates our whole morality of discourse; concerned with a fundamental antilogy, that of the *animate/inanimate*, it disturbs it, dissipates it to the advantage of neither of the terms. With us, the marionette (Punch for example) is there to hold up to the actor the mirror of his opposite, animating the inanimate but so as the better to reveal its degradation, the abjectness of its inertia; a caricature of 'life', it affirms precisely thereby life's *moral* limits and serves to confine beauty, truth and emotion in the living body of the actor – he who nevertheless makes of that body a lie. (Barthes, 1984: 171)

In *The Empire of Signs* (1983/1970) and 'Lesson in Writing' in *Image, Music, Text* (1984), Barthes claims that the traditional Japanese theatre of Bunraku rejects the antinomy of animate/inanimate. He discusses Bunraku by placing it in opposition to 'Punch' of Western puppet theatre and Western theatre in general. Barthes' use of antithesis is revealing in several important ways for my project here: firstly, in terms of what I would argue is his inability to see Bunraku as anything other than in terms of an opposition to Western theatre, and secondly, and connectedly, in terms of his use of Bunraku as a metaphor to comment on Western metaphysics. An additional important point for Barthes' interpretation of the phenomenon is that the Bunraku puppet has no strings '... hence no more metaphor, no more Fate; since the puppet no longer apes the creature, man is no longer a puppet in the divinity's hands, the *inside* no longer commands the *outside*' (Barthes, 1983: 62). In my reading of this, Barthes reveals here how the use of metaphor can conceal a gap in knowledge, hence commenting on the difficulties in using language when we talk about these kinds of complexities.

In 'Lesson in Writing' Barthes discusses Bunraku in terms of how it 'refuses the antinomy of *animate/inanimate* and dismisses the concept hiding behind all *animation* of matter; that, quite simply, of 'the soul' (Barthes, 1984: 172). He goes on to say that 'Another opposition destroyed is that of inner/outer. Consider the Western theatre of the last few centuries. Its function is essentially to reveal what is reputed to be secret ('feelings', 'situations', 'conflicts') while concealing the very artifice of the process of revelation (machinery, painting, make-up, sources of light)' (Ibid: 172-3). Barthes argues that Western metaphysics is as deceptive as the Western theatre that he

discusses, contrasting it to Bunraku that he sees as revealing its workings. He describes Western theatre as using illusion to reinforce its own metaphysics in terms of

the metaphysical link the West cannot help establishing between body and soul, cause and effect, motor and machine, agent and actor, Destiny and man, God and creature: if the manipulator is not hidden, why – and how – would you make him into a God? (Barthes, 1983: 62)

Barthes criticised metaphysics, in the second half of the twentieth century, in terms of privileging what appears, and forgetting to consider the condition for that appearance. One can see the importance of his description of antithesis as opposing good and evil in this respect, as a commentary on a metaphysics that conceives good to be before evil, thus installing hierarchies and privileging one term in opposition against the other. In his *Margins of Philosophy* (1982), meanwhile, Derrida discusses deconstruction's use of, and interest in oppositions and suggests that,

An opposition of metaphysical concepts (for example, speech/writing, presence/absence, etc.) is never the face-to-face of two terms, but a hierarchy and an order of subordination. Deconstruction cannot limit itself or proceed immediately to neutralization: it must, by means of a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, practice an *overturning* of the classical opposition, and a general *displacement* of the system. It is only on this condition that deconstruction will provide the means with which to *intervene* in the field of oppositions it criticizes, which is also a field of nondiscursive forces. (Derrida, 1982: 329)

Derrida's notion of deconstruction provides and enables an intervention, which attempts to negate the concept of the observer as being passive and exterior to the object/subject being examined, and defines them rather as an active agent in the field of oppositions that they operate *within*.

As a Western practitioner attempting to account for the performance processes of a Japanese theatre company such as Kaitaisha, I cannot remove myself from the complexities that Barthes and Derrida have raised. I am the observer who can only see myself (my self) as inextricably part of the perceiving subject that I am examining. In my role as researcher, it is necessary to borrow from the expertise of ethnography, and within this 'ethnographic turn' I should not see and privilege that which appears before me without forgetting the causal factors that condition that appearance. I must consider questions of opposition and hierarchy in terms of 'eastern' and 'western', that I

effortlessly embody, and deconstruct the problematic definitions (hence my self) themselves. 'Lesson in Writing' draws on Barthes' earlier writing in *Empire of Signs* where he identifies a Japan of the (Western) imagination, and a Japan that is rich in signifiers that together articulate their own narrative and their own text; not necessarily decodable in European terms. Importantly, this 'textualisation' can also be interpreted to reveal Barthes as a westerner desiring the 'Orient', in Edward Said's terms (Said, 2003), hence desiring the 'other' (that is, by definition, the 'not I'). I am the 'westerner' who must consider my own desire for the 'other'- or for otherness - in the context of my work with Kaitaisha.

### **Lesson Three: Inside/Outside**

What we can now see is that Barthes was unable to discuss Bunraku without using his own cultural background as a contrast to it, thus echoing his use of opposition within the text. We might need to take a lesson from this cultural aspiration, and evident failure, and ask whether this is an avoidable or even desirable aspiration. Barthes has created an 'empire of signs' through his writing, which places on the 'other' an identity of his own willing or unconscious creation, and which positions himself as the knowing observer, of that complex other, along similar lines to Barba's 'Theatre Anthropology'. In *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, anthropologist Michael M. J. Fischer describes this bifocal approach as 'seeing others against a background of ourselves, and ourselves against a background of others' (Fischer, 1986: 199). Fischer goes on to describe ethnographers who are 'seeking in the other clarification for processes in the self' (Ibid: 199), and states that in this sense we should read ethnographies, in part, in terms of our knowledge of the author, the insider 'observer', as well as the time and place of writing. In the introduction to the edited collection, James Clifford talks of the 'indigenous ethnographer' in terms of her or him being an insider who is thus able to 'offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways' (Clifford, 1986: 9). Such depths of understanding, along with those same constraints, are perhaps only available to the 'indigenous ethnographer' or 'insider'.

In *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan: An anthropological view* (1984), Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, a Japanese American anthropologist, offers us a different, discipline-specific, orientation: her inquiry accounts for health care in contemporary Japan, providing a detailed and historically informed account of the cultural practices and cultural meaning of health care in its urban environments. Although she describes the study as being comparative in perspective, Ohnuki-Tierney states that she does not intend to present a systematic comparison between health care systems in Japan and the United States. In this nonetheless comparative approach, she intends for the Western reader to reflect on their own health-seeking behaviours and beliefs. When Ohnuki-Tierney conducted her research in Japan she had lived in the United States for two decades, she therefore views herself as an ‘outsider’ within Japanese culture. Ohnuki-Tierney’s position as trained anthropologist-writer, in her writing, raises several important questions regarding the objectivity and position of the ‘insider’ observer, regarding notions of ‘self’ and ‘reflexivity’, and the ‘negotiated reality’ of the anthropologist and the informant(s).

Ohnuki-Tierney discusses her own shifting position as insider/outsider within her research in terms of detachment, whereby she regards it as vital to have a sense of ‘distancing’ from Japanese culture. She observes,

When I returned in 1979 to do my first anthropological work among my own people in Kobe, they seemed strange, with intriguing behavioural patterns and thought processes ... Astonishingly, however, my vivid reactions became increasingly milder after only a month and a half, and I found myself becoming more and more like “them”. Their behavioural patterns were no longer as pronounced, and after about four months I felt the need to pull back to regain my perspective; hence my return to the United States. This turned out to be a good strategy, in that I was able to regain my perspective and refine the focus of my research before I resumed fieldwork in 1980. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984: 16)

Not unlike other writers in the field in the nineteen eighties, as can be seen in *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986), she regards the so-called native anthropologist’s difficulty in perceiving his or her own familiar customs and behaviours as problematic. Ohnuki-Tierney views such ‘native’ anthropologist’s problems in observation as extending to the presentation of findings, where she says that, from her own position, it can be difficult to perceive reactions from



a ‘Western’ audience; an observation which is not without implications for my research and creative work here. In a different sense to Ohnuki-Tierney, I also require a ‘distancing’ from my engagement with Japanese culture through Kaitaisha in order to enable me to account for collaborations within the company. This involves a retrospective examination of the practice, as I attempt to account for it in this research; I discuss this in detail in Chapter Five.

Ohnuki-Tierney describes the notion of ‘self’ and ‘reflexivity’, whereby the ‘main premise is that by studying another culture, we become reflexive about our own collective self, our own culture, through a study of the “other”, “another culture”’ (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984: 15). She describes such reflexivity as achievable (although the degree of achievement is not discussed) through distancing from self or objectifying the self, a notion that we find in a range of twentieth century writers including Heidegger, for whom, according to Cetina, such distancing allows thematisation of the self (as discussed in Knorr Cetina’s ‘Objectual Practice’ in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (Knorr Cetina, 2001)). In terms of ‘otherness’, as we find it in a number of writers of the period, including Edward Said (2003), this notion is of interest as the process of reflexivity means one is pulled towards the other and away from the self. This ‘pulling’ can be seen as an attraction or, in everyday readings of Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, a desire towards that which is perceived to be other to self, and thus a desire towards self-transformation.

The ‘negotiated reality’ that occurs between the anthropologist and the informant when they encounter one another, where the presence, and perhaps both the otherness and the authority of the anthropologist, encourages the informants to be reflective about their own culture, is raised by Ohnuki-Tierney (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984: 15). She views the impact of the presence of an anthropologist as differing between native and non-native anthropologists:

For fieldwork in Japan, foreign anthropologists initially have a tremendous advantage. All foreigners, especially Westerners, usually receive the red-carpet treatment from the Japanese, who go out of their way to accommodate them ... Unfortunately, the drawback of this favourable treatment is that the host people “perform” for them; the anthropologists presence becomes an important factor in the way that the host people act and react. (Ibid: 17)



Ohnuki-Tierney sees this as the ‘negotiated reality’ that exists ‘at least until the anthropologists’ presence becomes less conspicuous’ (Ibid: 17). In my view, I operate within Kaitaisha as both ‘foreigner’, where individuals go out of their way to accommodate me, and as ‘native’, where I am a company member, as I go on to discuss in detail. It is clear to me that in certain respects I receive special treatment, where, for example, I am generally not allowed to sweep the floor pre-rehearsal (as a foreign guest).



Figure 33: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Honma Ryoji, Hino Hiruko, and Aota Reiko, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

In her PhD thesis ‘The Difference Butoh Makes: A Practice-Based Exploration of Butoh in Contemporary Performance and Performer Training’ (Barbe, 2011), dance practitioner Frances Barbe reflects on her own butoh practice and examines the difference butoh has made to her approach as a performer, choreographer and in terms of performer training. Barbe’s work is relevant to highlight here in relation to Ohnuki-Tierney’s writing on the ‘insider’ observer, and the ‘negotiated reality’ of the anthropologist and the informant(s). Whereas Ohnuki-Tierney regards herself as shifting between an insider/outsider position in her research, and views the ‘distancing’ from Japanese culture that she achieves as important, I would suggest that Barbe occupies a position that lies somewhere inbetween the notion of ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’, and that this position is perhaps closer to that which I occupy in my research project. As opposed to Ohnuki-Tierney, Barbe participates in the thing that she is studying and, over time, Barbe has assimilated butoh into her own embodied practice to create what she describes as ‘my butoh’ (Ibid: 2); the participative nature of Barbe’s practice is clearly relevant to consider in relation to my own project.

Barbe’s research is concerned with a Japanese practice (butoh), and her engagement with it in Australia, Japan, and Europe, as opposed to Ohnuki-Tierney’s engagement with Japanese practices *in* Japan; also the butoh that Barbe encounters is already clearly a form of hybridised practice in itself. However, it is nonetheless relevant to focus on Barbe’s engagement with butoh because, I would argue, its Japanese identity is central to its character. Clearly, the distinction between Ohnuki-Tierney as ‘active observer’ and Barbe as ‘participant’ is important, as through participation the practice is embodied and distinctions of inside/outside cannot be clearly drawn, as a new hybrid practice is assimilated into the self. In her project Barbe retrospectively reflects on her own choreographic works of *Fine Bone China*, *Palpitation*, and *Chimaera* (performed between 2003 – 10), as work that draws on her engagement with butoh, and the choreographer/performer-researcher dichotomy is importantly retrospective. What is of interest to me here is that Barbe acknowledges her other-than-Japanese identity as important to her engagement with butoh, for example, she describes herself as a ‘gaijin dancer’ (Ibid: 22) (the Japanese word *gaijin* is translated as foreigner, alien, or not-one-of-us), and she makes references to the importance of herself as a ‘western performer’ approaching butoh (Ibid: 25). This difference, for Barbe, is concerned with a western dancer training of ballet and contemporary dance that left her with a rigid style and a

particular patterning that she sought to undo through butoh practice (Ibid: 23). Barbe states that the difference in butoh from her previous dance training was that she had to allow herself ‘... to “be moved”, not to dance, but “be danced”’ (Ibid: 23).

Barbe also makes clear that she has worked primarily with Japanese butoh dancers - Endo Tadashi, Yoshioka Yumiko, and Kan Katsura, who have worked for a long time outside of Japan, and that these dancers are often required to and are able to articulate the work and the notions that underpin it more explicitly *because* they operate outside of Japan (Ibid: 118). Hence, Barbe is clearly operating within something that she acknowledges she is ‘outside’ of, and yet, she seems to have assimilated this within herself, through its articulation in ‘western’ terms. In similar terms to those I have described above, I would suggest that my own verbal powers of articulation become more conscious and precise through the sharing of the practice that I am engaged with. I would suggest that my insider/outsider position within my project sits somewhere in-between Ohnuki-Tierney and Barbe’s approaches, where I have, to an extent, embodied the practices that I am engaging with and am no longer outside of them; yet, I am simultaneously aware of my otherness to the practices that I have embodied.

#### **Lesson Four: Gekidan Kaitaisha - A Negotiated Reality**

##### **Gekidan Kaitaisha, ‘The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution’, First Performance, Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010:<sup>50</sup>**

*Stood in the cramped dressing room space in the pitch black we wait for the sound of the audience leaving to quieten before we switch on the lights. Hino and Aota are stood with me, we whisper ‘otsukaresama deshita’<sup>51</sup> to each other, and they both praise me on my performance tonight. We realise that the performance, our first full run through, has been over two hours long. I am sodden with sweat, shaking with exertion and adrenalin,*

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<sup>50</sup> This account is based on my notebook entries and recollection of the rehearsal period with Gekidan Kaitaisha on *With Eternal Revolution*, Tokyo, July – August 2010; it is written after the rehearsal period. I employ this mode of writing in order to attempt to illuminate my sensed and felt experience of the rehearsal period.

<sup>51</sup> This phrase is often used in the Japanese work place; it can be loosely translated as ‘you have worked hard, you must be tired’, however, the usage of the phrase is broad and difficult to directly translate. In the Kaitaisha context it is used between performers post-rehearsal and post-performance to show appreciation of, or acknowledge, the other persons hard work.

*and my hair clings to my face. I stand still, trying to cool and calm myself; it has been a hectic and intense day.*

*As is usual with Kaitaisha, we rehearsed until just before the performance in an atmosphere fused with tension and frustration. Shimizu spent hours perfecting the lighting and the direction of red laser beams, whilst we stood in our final positions, the red light falling on our faces as we tried not to look into the light. The heavy coat and the suitcase I carried pulled me downwards, and I try to preserve my strength and focus for the performance. There had been little time to eat today. There is no space or time for translation, and I instinctively move to where I am needed, or speak text when I think Shimizu wants it spoken, interpreting what he is saying with my basic Japanese.*

*We stop setting the final scene fifteen minutes before the doors open, and all move quickly, changing into costumes, adjusting hair or wigs and make up, setting props, checking cues with other performers, and walking through our choreographies in the space. Gradually calm descends as we all begin to warm up; we work individually, yet also together, quietly focussed. Shimizu speaks, indicating that it is time to begin; we shake each other's hands saying 'otsukaresama deshita', and pre-performance nerves set in. I move to my space in the 'wings', the cramped utility room, where I sit on the floor with Honma, my back against the fridge and a cooling ice pack wrapped in a towel held to my forehead, waiting for my entrance in the second scene. I have never experienced Japan in mid-summer before, and I am struggling with the intense humidity. In the silent dim light, we wait, absorbing the sounds and visualising the scene that we cannot see.*

*As I enter the performance space on my cue, carrying a large picture in my arms, I brush against an audience member, and I am suddenly aware of the vast number of people filling the space, the air is heavy with their presence. Drawing myself back into my movement, I begin to move through my scene: placing the picture on the floor and moving into a choreography that uses my nervous system and gestural memory, then moving into text, into a Kaitaisha choreography called 'Sea-dog'<sup>52</sup>, into a song and finally a collapse. Honma and Kumamoto perform with me, we move through individual*

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<sup>52</sup> I discuss the 'sea-dog' sequence in further detail on page 164.

*sequences, yet we maintain both a choreographic and a murekehai<sup>53</sup> connection with each other. It is unbearably hot and my body is soaked with sweat. I feel liberated to be able to move without Shimizu frequently stopping me, as happened in the rehearsals. I exit, change my costume, and enter again for the final scene with the full company.*



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* 2010: ‘Pre-performance Warm-up’]**

**[The full performance can be seen in performance documentation DVD’s 1 and 2, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution*, Canvas Studio, Tokyo (2010) Disc One and Two]**

During this ‘negotiated reality’ of the performance with Kaitaisha, and plainly with an audience, I felt ‘less conspicuous’ and less ‘other’ in terms of my presence. I felt myself to be a company member; working together as performers, going through the motions of the performance itself, without the need for translation or interpretation as the composition was already in place. Yet for the audience I was conspicuous as ‘other’, as a non-Japanese performer who spoke English in the performance, and as a guest company member. In a post performance discussion that I had with dance critic Takeshige Shinichi, he said that he felt my gravity, as a performer, was very low, and I seemed to dance as if I was from a cold place (personal conversation, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010). Another audience member Saito Koshiro said that he felt that the Japanese performers’ bodies appeared to be ‘empty’ or blank, whereas in my body he saw an ‘identity’ or ‘personality’ (personal conversation, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010). These Japanese audience

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<sup>53</sup> Kaitaisha have developed a way of moving together, which they describe as *murekehai* (pack) sensation. The performers in the ‘pack’ aim to maintain a connection to the other performers and move as ‘one body’, whilst continuing to move through their own individual choreographies; these individual choreographies are wholly dependent on the impetus given by other members of the pack; I discuss *murekehai* in detail on page 180.

members claim to have seen me as distinctively ‘other’, and perhaps placed on me attributes that they associated with someone from the UK, such as cold weather or a supposed ‘Western’ sense of individuality. This sense of ‘otherness’, again in their account, seems to have been one in which I was seen in direct contrast to the Japanese members of Kaitaisha. This sense of my ‘otherness’, as experienced by such audience members, was perhaps made more explicit by my framing in the performance composition, where I am often spatially isolated (for example on a beam high above the stage, on a high chair, or in my own area of the performance space), or where I have solo scenes that often act as a prelude to the performance, as I discuss in detail in Chapter Five.

My presence, I would argue, and my attempts to initiate dialogue, encouraged the company to be reflective about their own practice and to verbalise this reflection. As I interviewed Shimizu and Hino the day after the final performance, Shimizu was required to contemplate my observations about a shift in Kaitaisha’s performance-making approach, and on the issues that he is dealing with through his work. I asked Shimizu to reflect on ‘With Eternal Revolution’, and, through Hino’s translation, he said that:

I want to think about audiences in Japan. I want to psychoanalyse the Japanese audience [laughs]. There is a problem, so I want to analyse it. Japanese audience are very different to those in foreign countries. It is a historical problem. On the surface Japanese look individualistic, underneath they are very similar [to each other]. In order [for Kaitaisha] to survive the genre of theatre in Japan, it is a necessary strategy – other media is more attractive for young people. Young people only use the forefront of technology as an information system. Young people see theatre as *just* information; they view it in the same way that they would view movies, TV, *kaitai* [mobile telephones] or the PC. They cannot see the body, just the surface information the body gives, or a ‘character’ and that tendency stops thought ... We want dialogue [with the audience] ... Theatre should not submit to conditions of plasticity or flexibility ... flexibility or plasticity are now demanded of the dancer ... I want to create a theatre that is critical of post-Fordism ... The next performance will be an extension of the previous one; the theme is ‘extinction’.... What kinds of thought or human’s are extinct? ... We want to focus on incidents ‘hidden’ from society and unpublished [censored] texts. (Transcribed from film-recorded interview with Shimizu, S., conducted through translation from Japanese to English by Hino, H., Canvas Studio, Tokyo, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010)

Shimizu observed that the discussion was very useful to him and reminded him of many things connected to his work. Through reflecting on Kaitaisha’s practice, and discussing

in detail past and future Kaitaisha work it seemed to me that Shimizu was making new insights about the company's work, and clearly such a reflective discussion will feed into how he develops future company work. It is notable that I conducted the interview, transcribed above, through Hino's translation; this allowed for pauses in the conversation and space for further reflection for Shimizu, hence his responses seemed to emerge as a complex and reflective thought process. Likewise, I would suggest that my presence affected the rehearsals in many ways, for example, in terms of the constant pauses, or interruptions, for translation, or in terms of the 'outsider' perspective and input that I brought to the rehearsals as an individual who has not collaborated with the company recently. The nature of work that I created influenced the direction that the piece took in terms of composition. In my view, all Kaitaisha performers and their individual 'signature' practices influence the composition of the work, however, I would suggest that my placing in the performance composition is notable in comparison to other Kaitaisha performers, as I am often spatially isolated (as I discuss above, and in Chapter Five), and my participation in a Kaitaisha performance therefore alters the compositional arrangement. In 'With Eternal Revolution' (2010) my scene involved a solo performance, which developed into a 'duet' with Honma (see page 120), this scene therefore acted as a contrast to the other scenes in the performance as they involved several performers. In addition, as Shimizu acknowledged, my contribution influenced the direction of future company work in terms of the themes and motifs that emerged from our discussions and from my choreographic contribution.

As Ohnuki-Tierney has discussed, we can become reflexive about our own collective self (for example, as Europeans) through a study of the 'other'. Shimizu acknowledges such self-transformation in his approach to performance making, following his collaborations with performers outside Japan. This recalls the more recent writing by Brian Massumi that identifies qualitative transformation as an aspiration of the artist more generally (Masumi, 2002). The *Dream Regime* project began at Chapter Arts Centre in 2004 as a collaborative investigation into hidden histories of cultural diversity and migration through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the 'globalised body' in performance. A group of around 25 performers, visual artists, filmmakers, and academics from the UK, the US, Indonesia, East Timor, South Korea, and Australia collaborated with Kaitaisha over a 3 week period to create a work-in-progress performance. This collaboration served as my introduction to Kaitaisha. The project led to Kaitaisha undertaking a series

of performances and residencies with artists in Europe, Jordan, Brazil, East Timor, and Japan, and I was involved in some of these events. In discussion with Shimizu, he said that prior to this project his approach to making performance was one where he alone decided the content of the work.

During the Chapter collaboration, following an introduction to Kaitaisha's work and an open discussion relating to the themes of the project, small groups of individuals gave a performance presentation (the workshop participants were divided into smaller groups to devise work based on Kaitaisha signature practices that we engaged with and on group discussions around the themes of the workshop). Shimizu then choreographed this 'etude', and devised the performance through a layering of these contributions. This approach firstly emerged because Shimizu was interested in having a cross-cultural dialogue with artists, and secondly as a result of the logistically complicated task of having to create a performance with over 30 individuals communicating through several translators. Shimizu said that since this collaboration he has worked in the same way in Japan, whereby individual company members present a performance 'etude', which is framed by a discussion relating to the themes, and the performance is then created through Shimizu's layering of these individual contributions.



[Please see at this point 'Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution 2010: 'Etudes''*]

In an essay about the *Dream Regime* project Shimizu acknowledges how working with performers outside Japan helps him to define what a 'theatre of *shin-tai* (body)' is:

*Shin-tai* (Bodies) are not realities, but 'phantoms' or 'visions' ... *shin-tai* (bodies) are culturally and historically constructed. For example, a Spanish performer who usually speaks in English at workshops and discussions will visibly gain strength in his *shin-tai* (body) when he utters his lines in Spanish, his mother tongue. This is one instance of how a language—firmly rooted in a particular sociohistorical context--affects the *shin-tai* (body). Similarly, the performer's



demeanour changes depending on who his interlocutor is: what would happen if he were to stand face-to-face with a Mexican actor? According to what I have learned from my experience, historical background and relations give definitive 'changes' to both mode of utterance and physical behaviour. This 'change' can be seen in a conversation between an Indonesian actor—who blames the Netherlands for the suffering of Indonesians during the colonial era—and an East Timor activist, who in turn denounces the massacres carried out by the Indonesian army. Likewise, this 'change' is visible in the gesture of a Palestinian dancer, who told me about her nation's cultural richness, when she speaks to her Filipina maid. In short, 'phantoms/visions' suppress and impart a limit to the subject's narcissism and guide *shin-tai* (bodies) to become subjects desiring for 'reflective thought'. (Aparna et al, 2010: 21)

Hence, through seeing the culturally-positioned 'other' Shimizu gains deeper understanding of his 'Theatre of the Body'. It is relevant to note that Japanese theatre practitioners have no single term to express what people mean by 'body'. *Niku-tai* is 'flesh' or 'body of presence'; *shin-tai* is a culturally and historically conditioned body, and *jin-tai* is a bio-political body, such as an object of medical treatment.

Ohnuki-Tierney defines her position, in terms of being a native anthropologist, as either 'insider' or 'outsider'. Yet, in Barthes' terms, whereby he is critical of a metaphysics of hierarchical oppositions, the terms themselves are problematic. To describe oneself in terms of either 'insider' or 'outsider' serves to constrict oneself as Actor (or active) within these parameters. In the Kaitaisha studio, I felt my position to be unstable, constantly shifting: there were clearly moments when I was physically present but nonetheless outside of events, in terms of understanding. For example, my understanding of Japanese is basic and I was reliant on translation. Translation was not always possible, and there were moments when I could not understand instruction and participate, especially in the frantic few days before the first performance. Clearly, my 'outsider' status extended to my status as a guest performer, and as someone who is not Japanese and who does not therefore have an immediate grasp of the complex concepts that the company are addressing in their work, such as their critique of Japanese nationalism<sup>54</sup>. Yet, as I attempted to illustrate in my description of the performance

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<sup>54</sup> I am not suggesting by this that the Japanese company members will share a single understanding of Japanese nationalism, rather that they will individually have a complex matrix of understanding of the concept. Such a complex understanding of Japanese nationalism will be inaccessible to me culturally, because of both my cultural background and the unavoidable cultural assumptions that I will bring to such a concept. It is also relevant to note that the concept of national identity is problematic in itself and raises complementary problems

itself, I am also an ‘insider’ company member who has the sorts of complex and close personal relationships with Kaitaisha members that evolve when working with people in such an intense environment. My role within Kaitaisha and my relationship with company members has developed since 2004 over ten performance projects; these projects have taken place in four different countries and have involved working with core members, and with a range of other collaborating international artists. In addition, I have spent a period of time living in Japan and working with Kaitaisha whilst they – we - were training, rather than making a specific production. Throughout this time, I have seen a shift in company membership and seen several members join the company for a period of several years, and then leave.



Figure 34: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution*: Discussion during rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Sugiura Chizuko, Shimizu Shinjin, Kumamoto Kenjiro, Ishi Yasuji, Hino Hiruko, and Jonathan Giles Garner, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

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concerning the idea that ‘humans’ are discrete individuals equally distinct from one another relative to ideas.

During the collaboration on ‘With Eternal Revolution’ (2010), I met two new company members Honma Ryoji and Ishi Yasuji; both had worked with Kaitaisha for at least a year, and were regarded as new members in comparison to the other company members. Ishi had previously worked with Kaitaisha briefly in 2001, and returned to the company in 2009. During one particular rehearsal for a scene where Jonathan Giles Garner<sup>55</sup> and Ishi perform together, Shimizu asked Ishi to perform an action as part of a sequence that involves hitting Garner repeatedly on the back. Kaitaisha often re-use gestures, choreographies, and text in their work in an attempt to explore further such signature performance phrases through repetition. The ‘hitting sequence’ in previous work has often been performed by a male performer hitting a female performer whilst she speaks the names of the Japanese Emperors (as was learned by children in school). Following Shimizu’s request, Ishi pushed Garner’s body forward, lifted up his shirt to reveal his bare back, and gently slapped it. As is usual with Kaitaisha rehearsals, performers who are not performing in the rehearsed scene will sit and watch. I could immediately see that Ishi had not performed this simple action correctly according to Kaitaisha’s signature. Kumamoto Kenjiro laughed, and both he and Hino entered the performance space and gave a demonstration to Ishi as to how he should move and slap Garner; the gesture appeared simple, yet he was required to carry it out in a very specific way, which involved a particular intention and energy. In contrast to Ishi’s gentle caress-like slap, Hino raised her hand high, and brought it down against Garner’s back with force and intention, and I would suggest that this particular intention and energy is evident in Kaitaisha’s signature gestures and way of moving.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* 2010: ‘The Hitting Sequence’]**

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<sup>55</sup> Jonathan Giles Garner is a British performer who lives in Japan; he has collaborated with Kaitaisha on various productions since 2007.

This intention of movement relates to my suggestion in Chapter Two (page 94) that the Kaitaisha performer perceives material objects in the performance space not as separate from them, but as an extension of their self and the space; I would suggest that this applies not only to material objects, but also to other performers and spectators, and that through this particular intention of movement that I have described, the performer directly extends their energy to another performer, object, spectator or the space. The response to Ishi's action by company members and myself was an interesting example of what it means, in terms of an internalised way of seeing and doing, to be a 'trained' company member. In previous projects with Kaitaisha, I have witnessed other new company members (who have since left) being trained in the 'hitting sequence'. In this respect, my status as 'insider' company member is qualified by my being a trained member, with a degree of seniority in comparison to the new Kaitaisha members.

My status as trained performer is equally revealed in the way Shimizu and Hino developed my section of the performance with me. Once they appeared to be satisfied with how I had re-worked the 'etude' that I had presented to them at the beginning of the rehearsal process, Shimizu asked me to add the 'Sea-dog' sequence, then to sing a psalm, to move and collapse 'as a doll' (see figure 35, below), and then to exit the space moving with *murekehai* (pack) sensation. These instructions are all Kaitaisha movement or text signatures that I have performed previously. I was trusted to develop my section independently with these 'signatures' as part of it.



**[Please see at this point 'Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* 2010: 'Translation and Direction' and 'Scene Development']**

Such reflections pose a question that seems to me to be key here: whether being a 'trained' member is more valuable to Shimizu than being a Japanese member. In terms of understanding identity and belonging within Kaitaisha, I would suggest that shared artistic signature critically destabilizes any appeals to 'cultural' identity. In an interview,

I asked Shimizu whether the training, rehearsal, and performance process differs when a non-Japanese performer, such as myself, collaborates with Kaitaisha. Shimizu responded that the process differs according to each individual, and is not determined by a performer being Japanese or non-Japanese, saying that for example, the process of working with Garner and myself is very different, despite our shared nationality (Interview with Shimizu, S., translated by Hino, H., Canvas Studio, Tokyo, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010). I report this statement, not because I am surprised that Garner and I respond to the work differently despite having a shared nationality, but to illustrate that, as I understand it, Shimizu's interest in myself or Garner as performers claims to move beyond seeing us as 'other' in terms of our national identity. I address this view of myself further in Chapter Five, in terms of how I am arguably framed as 'other' in the performance composition by Shimizu. As with the inside/outside question, the question of being a 'trained' Kaitaisha member is complex. Shimizu's interest moves beyond that of the trained/untrained or Japanese/non-Japanese performer, and he is as much interested in, and drawn to, the untrained performer body as he is to the trained performer body, as he implied when discussing the new untrained company member Ishi Yasuji. Shimizu attempts to deconstruct the body through the body of the performer, and in doing so create a 'Theatre of the Body', whose implications are clearly transcultural.

### **Lesson Five: From East-West to North-South**

The term 'Non-Western' is highly problematic, a negative definition for which the positive term is 'Western', and it defines those placed in this category as a residue (Said: 2003). As Ohnuki-Tierney states: 'The term "West" or "Western" too is questionable, since it lumps many cultures with different traditions into one blanket category. The same can be said of the "Oriental" and the "Asian."' (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1990: 210). Within the context of Kaitaisha's 'Theatre of the Body', discussing the body in terms of western/non-western or in terms of being of the east/west is simplistic and problematic, reinforcing the hierarchisation criticized by Barthes. In discussion with Otori Hidenaga in 2001, Shimizu is nonetheless dismissive of the East/West boundary, which he regards as insignificant in relation to the problematic socio-economic and political boundary between the North and the South (presenting another

problematical binary opposition). This division is perceived to exist between wealthy ‘developed’ countries (including all G8 states) – the North – and the poorer less developed countries of the South. Most nations of ‘the North’ are located in the Northern hemisphere, although, as the exceptions of Australia and New Zealand indicate, the divide is not based on geography alone. The categorisation of countries by their economic and developmental status began during the Cold War with the classification of East and West, drawing on the historical division of Asia and Europe to explain an East-West opposition in cultural, religious and racial terms, as referred to by Said (2003), and this developed into the North/South categorisation. Shimizu is interested in unpacking and moving away from formalised movement processes that exist in both the ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ tradition, in Noh or Kabuki and in Martha Graham or classical Ballet, in order to transform or ‘free’ the human body – even if, as I have observed above, I have described my own involvement in these processes as *culturally* unstable. Shimizu sees the body as existing as part of a system:

In relation to theatre history, ever since Modernism, the body has ceased to be a vessel to express someone’s character. It has been reduced to physical elements such as velocity or body temperature or weight. It has become the locus of data. As a result, we can only see a human body as a number and a quantity. If we look back, this was first seen in World War I. War in the twentieth century discovered conversion techniques which turned bodies into materials, quantities, data. The consequence of which is the corpses of Iraqi soldiers buried in the desert, which we now are unable to count. They’re lying there, it seems to me, like "vanished shells". (Otori & Shimizu, 2001: 72)

His perspective as described in these terms is clearly politicised, ideologically driven, and generalising, and what are undoubtedly of interest here are the implications of these sorts of observations for his creative decision-making. The notion of the body as a cultural construct is central to Shimizu’s work, yet he also regards the body as the only possible document with the ability to tell the truth, as he has argued; ‘The theatrical body is the only medium capable of communicating the density and contradictions of lived experience in the 21st century’ (Martin, 2001). Kaitaisha’s theatre of the body emerged during the 1980’s, when, in an attempt to escape the sentimentality and remorseful recollections that Shimizu describes as having experiencing in *shôgekijô* performances, he took Kaitaisha’s work to outdoor public spaces. During this period Shimizu said that Kaitaisha encountered the problem of ‘the body’:

In the midst of these vast, freewheeling, chaotic circumstances, we discovered we could neither dance nor act! We could not possibly draw on pre-existing acting techniques that involve gushing emotions and large-as-life naturalism. What was invoked instead, was “Theatre of Images” supported theoretically by “body as object” or “the body as medium”. (Otori & Shimizu, 2001: 69)

Whilst developing their practice in relation to the ‘Theatre of Images’, Shimizu states that his ideas were ‘bankrupted’ by the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991, which removed any motivation he had and caused him to ‘... wrestle with issues surrounding the body and the power that besieges it. Practically this meant continuous practice in “walking” with the actors in our warehouse rehearsal space in Kawasaki with no performing for two years!’ (Ibid: 70). Shimizu regards theatre as “war”, in the sense that the human body is consumed in war (Ibid: 71), and he states that the Gulf War (1991) was significant in this respect because ‘... there was no body in the Gulf War. It was such a shock for theatre that a war without bodies had raised the curtain of the 1990s’ (Ibid: 71)<sup>56</sup>. During this period Shimizu and Kaitaisha grappled with these ideas, and with representing the impossibility of representation (Ibid: 73). Kaitaisha’s work at this stage was engaged with the notion that violence imposed on the body is a product of globalisation, capitalism, and the nation state.

During the first *Dream Regime* residency in Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (2004) several company members performed a scene from ‘Bye-Bye: Phantom’ (2003-4). Grainy aerial video footage shot from a plane engaged in a bombing operation in Afghanistan was projected against the studio wall, the target focussed on running bodies on the ground, which disappeared in silent detonations, as the barely audible voices of soldiers shouted commands. The footage was projected across the bodies of two performers; a male (Australian) performer wearing an army jacket staggered across the space, twisting and throwing himself with an intensity that suggested he had lost control of his body, and a female (Japanese) performer stood motionless and trembling, in traditional Japanese dress, her torso bare. The scene was raw and intense, and clearly complexly suggestive

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<sup>56</sup> For Shimizu, the Gulf war was a ‘war without bodies’ due to a new type of heavily televised war coverage created by satellite technology, where people viewed, for the first time, imagery from camera-equipped high-tech weaponry directed against Iraqi targets. The live images of missiles hitting their targets were viewed from the perspective of the machinery, which resembled video game imagery, and the body was often eradicated from such images. Shimizu’s notion of the ‘war without bodies’ also relates to Jean Baudrillard’s book *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (*La Guerre du Golfe n’a pas eu lieu*) (1991), in which Baudrillard proposes that the Gulf War was a form of battle that occurred in a hyper-real space dominated by the media, hence concealing the body, and was a carefully scripted media event – a virtual war.



in terms of the image of the active Caucasian man and the passive Japanese woman. Shimizu described his notion of performance as a metaphor for war, and his view of the body as a battlefield. He posed the question as to how the body can respond to the constructed image of media represented warfare, on the stage.



Figure 35: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Honma Ryoji, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, and Kumamoto Kenjiro, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

During this *Dream Regime* residency (2004) I was introduced to Kaitaisha's approach to the body through a concept chart entitled 'To actualise the new "political body"', which posed the questions 'Where are our bodies placed in the current context?' and 'What is currently besieging our bodies?'<sup>57</sup>. Shimizu explained that through his systematic approach he was attempting to deconstruct physical expression produced by the global system and that through Kaitaisha's work he was engaged in the question of

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<sup>57</sup> Taken from 'Gekidan Kaitaisha, Concept Chart for the workshop: To actualize the new "political body"', distributed at the *Dream Regime* workshop, Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, January 2004.



how he, as a director, should respond to the system of globalisation. The chart presented four categories that all interact within the global regime: capitalism, the media image, nationalism and physicalism; each category was ascribed a movement concept and technique as devised by Kaitaisha. ‘Capitalism’ was explored through the concept of transformation; ‘media image’ through repetition; ‘nationalism’ through ‘nervous system’, and ‘physicalism’ through ‘phantom pain’, and each concept was illustrated in detail through discussion and demonstration.

‘Transformation’ is concerned with the deconstruction of stereotype, or the socialised body, and the techniques the company have developed from this are ‘empty body/carrying’ (see page 163), ‘sea-dog’ (see page 164), and ‘pack (*murekehai*)’ (see page 180). Transformation relates to capitalism in terms of transformation deconstructing the ‘trance-state’ or the socialised body of, or produced by, capitalism. Transformation was described by the company in terms of ‘awakening’ the self, and a technique of ‘becoming’ rather than acting.

‘Repetition’ represents three kinds of repetition; the repetition of history, for example a nation’s history repeating in the present; déjà vu or flashback; and the repetition of labour, a custom or habit. Actions are thus repeated in the recovery of forgotten memories. Shimizu explained that the notion of repetition emerged from ‘media image’ because he regards the media as performing a kind of ‘brainwashing’, where the individual is repeatedly saturated with one idea and one image. Techniques developed from repetition are the use of testimony, and the use of flashbacks in the form of image, reflection, and action.

Company members demonstrated the three concepts behind ‘repetition’ through the showing of a short performance scene; a male performer wearing a suit chanted the words ‘of power’ increasingly frantically<sup>58</sup>; a female performer used handcuffs worn on one of her wrists to strike her own body with force; another female performer in Korean traditional dress (*hanbok*) stood immobile as the man stopped chanting and repeatedly

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<sup>58</sup> ‘Of Power’ is a signature sequence performed by Kumamoto Kenjiro. In the sequence, whilst accompanied by a backing track, Kumamoto begins quietly chanting ‘of power’, gradually he increases the volume of his chanting and his body violently rocks and sways, taught and tense. The sequence continues well beyond what might be regarded as a comfortable duration for both performer and, in my view – having witnessed this, audience member.

hit her on her bare back; each blow forced her to expel the name of a Japanese emperor<sup>59</sup>.

Shimizu explained that this was a ‘story’ about a traditional Japanese family and the stereotypical roles of mother, father and daughter; the scene is a microcosm, the internal situation of a family in Tokyo representing the larger picture of globalisation. The ‘father’s’ repeated words were inspired by Japanese karaoke singing, a popular form of release for the ‘salaryman’<sup>60</sup> after work, regarded by Shimizu as reminiscent of the repetition of labour; the ‘daughter’ re-lived the performer’s own traumatic memory of her mother forcing her to write the Japanese character ‘MA’ and also represented the common trend for self-harming amongst Japanese youth; and the ‘mother’s’ traditional dress represented the colonised Korean ‘comfort women’ who were forced to serve the Japanese army as prostitutes during the Second World War. Shimizu explained that Japanese children are taught to recite the names of the Japanese emperors at school and that his mother can still recite the 250 emperors names today. Shimizu argued that the nationalistic history of 1930’s Japan is repeating itself in the present, and said that through such a scene he is addressing the question of how individuals can respond to the repetition of colonial history in present day Japan, and questioning how he can represent this on the stage.

‘Nervous system’, as described by Shimizu, is concerned with the emergence of bodily movements suppressed through the reductionist qualification in data-capitalism, and through the uniform bodies of ‘nationalism’. The ‘nervous system’ technique organises movement through the nerves, and attempts to perform traces of memory inscribed on the body through ‘dancing’ to the tempo of one’s own nerves. Hino demonstrated this in the workshop, through a choreographic sequence that used a series of gestures and accelerated action. She explained that she collected gestures and movements from other people; for example, she removes the petals from a flower, a bird balances on her hand, she unravels a thread, she spins a bamboo stick, she fans herself, she is moved by

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<sup>59</sup>As I have already discussed, the hitting sequence is a signature Kaitaisha practice. In ‘Bye-Bye: The New Primitive’ (2001) a male performer repeatedly and forcefully strikes the back of an immobile female performer. On each strike she utters the names of Japanese emperors, interspersed with the names of places like Assyria, Hungary, Crimea, and Chosun.

<sup>60</sup>‘Salaryman’ is often used as a noun for a Japanese white-collar businessman. The term carries associations of long working hours, low status in the corporate hierarchy, and *karōshi* (death from overwork).

smoke, she strokes a cat and becomes a shy child. Hino moves between these gestures at first slowly and smoothly, and then increasingly frantically. Hino says that as memories of the gestures 'enter' her body they cease to be the original gestures, and she senses that separate bodies are floating on the surface of her skin.

The 'Phantom Pain' technique emerged from the thesis of 'physicalism', whereby everything supervenes in, or is necessitated by the physical, and from Shimizu's notion that media technology (such as the internet) supersedes the need for a physical extension of the body; hence, the purpose of 'phantom pain' is to regain this extension. 'Phantom Pain' is concerned with 'missing limbs' in contrast to the 'despotic' imagery of a unified and rhythmic 'theatre of life'. The phantom pain technique encourages the performer to move with the illusion of the missing limb, through working with extending the senses beyond the body and to multiple centres. A performer demonstrates this technique in the workshop, describing the image behind each movement: she becomes a 'dot'; at the centre of her body, she generates wings and extends them; she extends her arm and then returns to the dot; her leg extends ten metres, and then she returns; the arm extends in a different direction and then returns, followed by the head, the ear, and by any part of her body; finally, she throws her whole body, explaining that it is like being liquid. In this way of moving, the performer extends from their centre and then brings the movement back to their centre, imagining that they have an innumerable number of joints along the limb extending it.

Although Shimizu would reject the notion of a body defined by its nationality, he is critical of the notion of theatrical representation as being universal. He is also aware of myths surrounding the Asian body, as he illustrates when he discusses the role of female performers in 'Tokyo Ghetto' (1995):

...at that time, quite a few overseas producers had begun to visit our studio. Most of them didn't appear too pleased. Someone said, "What I want to see is Asian kindness!" In Asia, there's been events like the Nanking Massacre and the Sahako (Pol Pot's concentration camps). Ignoring this is worrisome. These events must not be forgotten. It is an artist's responsibility not to allow a structure capable of producing such events to go unchallenged. My stage becomes quieter, and more than before, the bodies are exposed. I am dealing with naked bodies. The materiality of bodies - sweat, weight, skin, blood, tears - which I thought I had discarded when I returned to the studio. How do I relate them to history? (Otori & Shimizu, 2001: 82)



Figure 36: *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* in rehearsal; Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, July 2010. Left to right, Honma Ryoji, Hino Hiruko, Ishi Yasuji, and Aota Reiko, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

The problematic surrounding the theatrical representation of a ‘globalised’ body is what Shimizu is concerned with in Kaitaisha’s work, yet it is worth observing here that his idealised project is likely to run up against the cultural assumptions and expectations of a number of his spectators. In an essay on the international *Dream Regime* project, Shimizu traces his view of how the body has been represented in Japanese theatre since the 1960s and 70s:

In the milieu of Japanese contemporary theater in the 1960s and the 70s, *shin-tai* (body) ... was referred as *niku-tai* (flesh) and was closely associated with the image of 'revolt' against the prison situation of the modern Europe. *Niku-tai* (Flesh) was thought to subvert the modern order, reversing the traditional hierarchy that prized intellect over sensitivity. The image of revolution was synonymous with the revolt of *niku-tai* (flesh) and once the rebellion of the *niku-tai* (flesh) was defeated, the concept of *shin-tai* (bodies) emerged or were invented. (Aparna et al, 2010: 21)

His reference here to the *niku-tai* body clearly recalls Hijikata’s *butoh*, which Kaitaisha drew upon in the development of their movement techniques, and it signals a culturally-

specific tradition that is likely to be evident to many Japanese spectators, but less so to European audiences. He goes on to explain what he means by the *shin-tai* body:

Shin-tai (Bodies) provided a way of breaking down the dichotomy, that is to say, it was in shin-tai (bodies) that the various permutations of this opposition, between something “becoming” and something “constructing”, could be reconciled. In shin-tai (bodies), the “intellect” was united with physical “sensation”, which yielded the notion of “perception”. Shin-tai (Bodies), narrated in the image of a place for both union of and conflict between the 'Apollonian' and the 'Dionysian' in order to repeat becoming and constructing, were being much discussed about their potential along with their compatibility with the new media technology developing at that time.

After 9/11, I realized that shin-tai (bodies) or niku-tai (flesh) cannot be captured by the Apollo/Dionysus binary any more, but they have to be approached by the concept of 'bios/zoe' binary. Shin-tai (bodies) here becomes something called 'Jin-tai (live human) - zoe' ... Jin-tai (live human) - zoe' is void of agency and incapable of any kind of resistance. It seems to have lost the human gestures, as if it is an existence - I call this existence 'fortification of shin-tai (body)'- that can neither perceive nor respond to the outside stimulus from the physical world. The problem then is: how can we apply 'zoe' to theater? We human beings have given precedence to 'bios' to such an extent that we have completely eliminated 'zoe'. How can we reclaim 'zoe'? I believe that the answer to this question may be contained in 'zoe' itself. If this is the case, we must ask ourselves what we, as human beings, can learn from 'zoe'. (Aparna et al, 2010: 21-22)

Shimizu's complex understanding of the *jin-tai* body is informed by philosopher Giorgio Agamben's work on the *homo sacer*, whereby the human is reduced to bare life (zoe), as opposed to qualified life (bios) (Agamben, 1998). He describes the *jin-tai* body as being no longer capable of feeling and reacting to the external world, and in this respect, he asks how theatre can represent such an unrepresentable body, recalling Lyotard's writing on the *differend* (Lyotard, 1983/1999). It is such questions that he poses to the audience in his work through the body of the performer, whether that body be my own 'European' body or another Kaitaisha member's 'Japanese' body. Plainly, given the diversity of audience members, it is not possible to argue that each spectator takes up those questions in these sorts of terms, whence some of the difficulties and some of the cultural ambivalence outlined in this account. Following this account of Kaitaisha's theorisation of the body, in Chapter Four I extend my account of Kaitaisha's interrogation of the body through tracing accounts of the body historically, and drawing on philosophically positioned theories of the subject and self. This enables me to describe the complexity of the body, and in particular my own performing body, as a

site of dilemmas, which is dynamic, in flux and hard to grasp as a singular, concrete, static, unchanging thing.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **‘Bodyness’, the Physically Complex Actional Self, and the Realm of the Possible in the Performer Body**



Figure 37: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in rehearsal, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Sugiura Chizuko and Honma Ryoji, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

This chapter begins with an outline of historical accounts of the body, in particular looking at how these accounts define bodies in terms of how they stand in relation to other bodies and their associated ‘minds’ (‘mind’ being itself an abstract metaphor I propose to unpick), or an equivalent animating principle. I consider the body in terms of being an aeriform container that, as Spinoza proposed, has the capacity for affecting and being affected. Referring to Spinoza’s ‘practical philosophy’, as discussed by Deleuze in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1988b), and to the body in extension, I consider the ‘unconsciousness of thought’ as being as profound and as significant as the unknown of the body, with certain clear implications for the ways we understand the relationship in

dance of the choreographer and the performer as creative decision-makers. I refer to the 'body without organs' as introduced by Artaud – whose interest, as practitioner-theorist, in certain Asian performance traditions is widely cited - and adopted by Deleuze and Guattari, and its echo of Spinoza's notion that the full potential of the body is still not available to us. I consider Deleuze and Guattari's 'plane of consistency', whereby the body is in flux, unfixed and with infinite potentialities, in terms of its widespread appeal to some dance practitioner-researchers. I briefly refer to the 'virtual' body as discussed by Massumi and Hayles, and to Massumi's 'body-self', drawing on this notion of a 'body-self' in order to discuss the performing body as a fractal subject-object. I refer in addition to Massumi's 'body-present' and Bergson's early 20<sup>th</sup>C insight that the past and future are continuous dimensions running in parallel to the present<sup>61</sup>.

Whilst the notions of the practicing performing body that I locate within philosophically positioned theories of the subject and self as defined by Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari, Spinoza and Massumi, are clearly useful, I suggest that in order to address the complexity of self in the performer body we need to locate *other* notions of self located in the practising performer body, necessarily viewed from the perspective of a material presence; it can be described diagrammatically through looking at the dynamic and relational self that operates in a collaborative framework (see for example figure 41, page 165, where the internal relation between performers is compounded by the performer-onlooker relation). I expand upon the notion of such an actional self through briefly drawing on Schatzki, who discusses practice as the central phenomenon in human life, and on Cilliers' understanding of complex systems (choreography is one such, and the performer work in a choreographic framework another). In order to draw out the complexity of the relational self in collaborative practice, I also reference a studio-based collaboration with dance/performance maker Noyale Colin (2011 – 12). It is important, at this point in my writing, to reference my self operating collaboratively outside of the Kaitaisha context, in order to reflect on notions of 'otherness' and the complexity of self in the performer body which are not (partially) defined in terms of

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<sup>61</sup> I acknowledge that in solely focussing on philosophically positioned theories of the subject and self as defined by Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari, Spinoza and Massumi I am making a selection from a much broader number of such theories of self.



cultural difference<sup>62</sup>. The overall query will be clearly positioned within, and led by, my understanding and experience of the physically complex actional self in *practice*.

As I have laid out in Chapter Three, Shimizu's culturally located understanding of the body is integral to his 'Theatre of the Body' and to an attempted 'deconstruction' of the performer body. Such an attempted 'deconstruction' of the body relates closely to the *butoh* body, and the 'revolt' of the *niku-tai* (flesh) body as associated with Japanese theatre and *butoh* in the 1960s/70s, and I shall thus frame my account of the body in this chapter by my reading of bodyness in *butoh* dance. This inquiry is therefore clearly pursued from a quite particular perspective, which is that of a European 'insider' account of the 'butoh body', as a hybridised, transcultural body whose delicate and ambiguous otherness allows a particular set of perspectives to be established and followed through.

As the image above attempts to illustrate, the actional and embodied self is not static; it is constantly in a state of flux (Figure 37). At the time of writing (post 03/11), I would argue that the body in Japan is in such a state. Following the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear crisis, the human body, the body politic, and indeed bodyness as it is more widely constructed (in reference to the notion of the earth itself as a body disrupted) is a site of trauma and is in a state of constant and unstable transformation as it is exposed to physical, geographical, political, and economic change, as it has variously been throughout history. Although I am considering broader questions about the self, it nonetheless remains important to highlight the current Japanese climate as I consider the self and the performer body in relation to the Kaitaisha and the *butoh* performer body. This context is also relevant to consider in relation to *butoh*, as parallels can be drawn with the conditions in which the *butoh* body emerged in the 1950s/60s, as (arguably, at least in part) a product of post-war, post-atomic bomb, traumatised Japan. Through contextualising the writing I intend to reflect upon the actional performer self operating in complex systems that are within, and inseparable from, wider complex systems.

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<sup>62</sup> Clearly, I do not solely define my complex collaborative self practicing with Kaitaisha in terms of difference and 'otherness', yet, as I have identified, these factors do have a role in terms of how I define the self of the performer operating with Kaitaisha.



Figure 38: The body in a state of flux and as a site of trauma: Medical staff use a geiger counter to screen a woman for possible radiation exposure at a public welfare centre in Hitachi City, Ibaraki on March 16, after she evacuated from an area within 20km radius of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant; the woman tested negative for radiation exposure (Arnott, 2011, photographer unknown).

### **‘Bodyness’ - A historical trace**

I acknowledge that the use of the term ‘the body’, as it is used in dance theory and writing, is generalising and problematic in its anonymising of dancers; however, it has clear currency in much performance writing, and I propose to continue to use it while remaining attentive to this problematic. Discussing ‘the body’ is a complex and grammatically delicate field, where there are clear distinctions between ‘the body’ (as a generalised term), ‘a body’, ‘somebody’ and ‘my body’; I thus favour the term ‘bodyness’ as a quality, rather than the nominalised form. In dance theory in recent years, the phrase ‘the body’ has been used in a number of different ways to describe something very different from standard empirical accounts of the body<sup>63</sup>, both in terms of its physical and temporal nature and extent, and its relation to accounts of ‘mind’. I argue, from my position as writer-artist-researcher-enquirer, that dance theory’s account of ‘the body’ touches upon broader philosophical questions relating to how the self of the performer can be understood, and within this chapter I develop this position further

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<sup>63</sup> See footnote 10.

in relation to the ‘self’ of the practicing performer. I position my understanding of the body, or bodyness, as a site of dilemma and as a heterogeneous multiplicity (Foucault 1980a).

Current usages of the ‘the body’ derive from a long and varied tradition that includes accounts from the Hindu tradition and Western philosophy of mind. In particular, these accounts appear to define ‘bodies’ in terms of how they stand in relation to other bodies *and* their associated minds, or an equivalent animating principle. In such accounts, ‘the body’ is described as something concrete, while ‘the mind’ remains abstract and a metaphor for something complex. The Indian Sankhya and Yoga schools of Hindu philosophy (c. 650 BCE) divided the world into *prakriti* (material substance) and *purusha* (mind/spirit) (Wainwright, 2012). Similarly, in the western philosophical tradition, Plato and Aristotle maintained, for different reasons, that the human intellect cannot be identified with, or explained in terms of, the physical body. The body, on this basis, would function like a vessel that is infused by the individual intellect or ‘*nous*’.

In the modern, Cartesian tradition, René Descartes held that the mind is fundamentally distinct from the body; it is a non-extended, non-physical substance, a *res cogitans*, occupying a completely different sphere of existence. According to Descartes, the mind corresponds to consciousness and self-awareness and is distinct from the extended material brain (Wilkinson, 2002). In contrast, the alternative, monistic view that mind and body are not ontologically distinct was first advocated in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE by Parmenides and later, by Baruch Spinoza, in the 17th century CE. This view rejects the metaphysical grounds of Descartes’ dualism. According to Spinoza, bodies and minds are not discrete substances, but are instead modifications of a single substance. Spinoza offered an alternative account of the motion and interaction of bodies that is not grounded on the Cartesian belief in a non-material subject, but is derived from the material, affective, and relational experiences of situated bodies (Deleuze, 1988b).

### **The body on the edge of crisis (dancing inside out)**

Deleuze, who sought to revisit certain philosophers in terms of later twentieth century European perspectives, writes that according to Spinoza's *Ethics*<sup>64</sup> '... what is an action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body as well, and what is a passion in the body is necessarily a passion in the mind. There is no primacy of one series over the other' (Deleuze, 1988b: 18). What is particularly influential, from my perspective here, about such a monist account for current dance theory is the questioning of the notion that empirical bodies, such as those of performers, are necessarily the receptacles of atomized self-sufficient and knowing *individuals*. In Deleuze's account, in one key instance, Spinoza talks of the body in extension, whereby '... when a body "encounters" another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its parts' (Ibid: 18), bringing to mind Kaitaisha's *murekehai* (pack) sensation (page 180). Deleuze discusses Spinoza's notion that we *experience* the effects of this *composition* and *decomposition* of relations: for example, the joy experienced when a body enters ours and thus enters into composition with it. This, Deleuze argues, illustrates our condition where we can only take in, or receive, that which happens to our body and to our mind, and therefore we are only able to have ideas which are either correspondingly 'adequate' or 'mutilated' (Ibid: 18). However, Deleuze goes on to argue that this model of the body does not imply devaluation of thought in relation to extension (being subject to it), but is instead a devaluation of *consciousness* in relation to thought. It therefore elevates the unconsciousness of thought as being as profound and as significant as the unknown of the body, with certain clear implications, it seems to me, for the ways we understand the relationship in dance of the choreographer and the performer as decision-makers brought together in performance-making processes and in performance itself.

Following Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, I would describe this choreographer-performer relationship as complex, where hierarchies of consciousness, command, and control exist within the relationship. According to Deleuze, this relationship can only be

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<sup>64</sup> I refer throughout this chapter to Spinoza's writing as it is described, referenced, and adopted by Deleuze, as opposed to Spinoza's original texts.

experienced through the *effects* of the composition and decomposition of relations, where ‘We are in a condition such that we only take in “what happens” to our body, “what happens” to our mind, that is, the effect of a body on our body, the effect of an idea on our idea’ (Ibid: 19), hence, the dancer-choreographer relationship is one experienced through effect. Which characteristics distinguish one body from another are also those that make them individual and thus identifiable. Spinoza identifies two separate but related characteristics to distinguish bodies: firstly, the causal relations of the infinite number of particles that, he contends, make up a particular body; secondly, its distinctive capacity for affecting and being affected by other bodies. For Spinoza these bodies are ‘modes’ of the single substance universe, hence by implication *ways* of doing/being, rather than states, only distinct insofar as they possess, from a given perspective, recognisably salient traits. Spinoza defines the body only by its capacities for *affecting* and *being affected*, and thus sees it as never separable from its relations with the world. Therefore, according to one Spinozist account:

A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. We call longitude of a body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between unformed elements. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is, the intensive states of anonymous force... In this way we construct a map of the body. The longitudes and the latitudes together constitute Nature, the plane of immanence or consistency, which is always variable and is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed, by individuals and collectives. (Ibid: 127-8)<sup>65</sup>

The radical notion of ‘the body without organs’ (BwO) was first introduced into cultural discourse by Artaud and adopted, adapted, and developed some decades later by writers, such as Deleuze and Guattari, over succeeding post-WWII decades, and has been influential in performance, where it can be seen - as aspiration at least - in the body of the butoh dancer. In Artaud’s radio play recorded in 1947 ‘*Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*’ (‘To have done with the judgement of god’)<sup>66</sup> he declares war on the organs, proposing the reworking of the human body to create a body without organs:

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<sup>65</sup> I drew on this aspect of Deleuze’s writing in the introduction section of the thesis (page 35), and I draw on it again here, as it is key to my understanding of the body.

<sup>66</sup>The Internet Archive:

<http://archive.org/details/ToHaveDoneWithTheJudgmentOfGodWrittenAndReadByAntoninArtaud>

Man is sick because he is badly constructed.  
We must make up our minds to strip him bare in order to scrape off that animalcule that itches him mortally,

god,  
and with god  
his organs.

For you can tie me up if you wish,  
but there is nothing more useless than an organ.

When you will have made him a body without organs,  
then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions  
and restored him to his true freedom.

They you will teach him again to dance wrong side out  
as in the frenzy of dance halls  
and this wrong side out will be his real place. (Artaud, 1976: 571)

The play was considered controversial and banned by the director of the station that had commissioned the work on the basis of it being inflammatory, obscene, and blasphemous. Artaud was writing as a drug addict, who suffered psychotic episodes throughout his adult life and endured incarcerations in a series of mental asylums; he died two months after completing the recording in March 1948. Such philosophical theories of self are thus clearly positioned in terms of the writer and the historical context in which he lived, which was marked more widely by, for example, Freudian theories of the self.

In 'I Artaud BwO: The Uses of Artaud's *To have done with the judgement of god*' (Cull, 2009), Sheer accounts for Artaud's BwO and positions it within the site of theatre:

For Artaud, organs are useless in terms of the production of vital energy (which is, after all, what bodies are for) and they sap the body's creative potential, forcing it to perform the menial tasks of biological *functions*. Organs render the body as slave rather than master. Artaud's image of the body without organs therefore contests not only the ways that bodies are structured, but the ways in which they perform, biologically and socially. This is why the theatre was the key site for Artaud's vision: it permits the imaginative reconfiguration of these bodily forms, comportments and behaviours and allows the body to act in ways that are profoundly anti-social. (Sheer, 2009: 42)

Scheer goes on to describe such ‘anti-social’ bodily behaviour as the reason why ‘Artaud’s development of radical potentials for physical expression and reception in performance could never be subsumed within Western theatrical institutions’ (Sheer, 2009: 42). As I discussed in Chapter One, as a practitioner-theorist, Artaud’s interest in certain Asian performance traditions is widely cited. In ‘Butoh: Dance of Utter Darkness’ (Todd: 8-9) Todd considers Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s essay ‘In Praise of Shadows’ (Tanizaki 2001, originally published 1933), which discusses and praises traditional Japanese aesthetics in terms of shadows and subtlety, contrasting light and darkness as a metaphor for ‘Western’ and Asian cultures<sup>67</sup>. Tanizaki regards the West as constantly striving for progress and clarity through lighting shadows, and thus creating an empty void in such lit space. Parallels can be drawn with Artaud, also writing in the 1930s, as he describes shadows as something essential which is absent in theatre and European culture: ‘Our petrified idea of the theater is connected with our petrified idea of a culture without shadows, where, no matter which way it turns, our mind (*esprit*) encounters only emptiness, though space is full’ (Artaud, 1958: 12).

As Todd continues to observe, in a similar vein Hijikata’s appreciation of the subtle darkness shadows provide can be seen in butoh. Hijikata attempted to translate his view of the body as essentially anarchic into the butoh body, in the sense that he viewed the body as having the ability to refuse those forms of social production that are imposed upon it. Artaud’s writings were first translated into Japanese in 1965, and there are well-documented links between his work and the development of butoh<sup>68</sup>, which practitioners and scholars continue to explore<sup>69</sup>. Hijikata treasured his pirate copy of Artaud’s ‘To have done with the judgement of god’, and in 1984 he used the recording

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<sup>67</sup> The terms ‘Asian’ and ‘Western’ are clearly problematic, as I have previously discussed (see Chapter Three), and as is discussed by Said in *Orientalism* (2003).

<sup>68</sup> Scheer highlights this historical connection between Artaud and butoh as he notes that Artaud-kan (the House of Artaud), which first performed in 1966 and throughout the 1960s and ‘70s, was one of the first butoh groups, and that Hijikata’s ‘Revolt of the Flesh’ (1968) was based on Artaud’s ‘Heliogabalus’ (Sheer: 2009: 53).

<sup>69</sup> In April 2011 (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>) I attended Artaud Forum 1: The World from Within and Without (in memoriam to Kazuo Ohno) at The Centre for Contemporary and Digital Performance at Antonin Artaud Performance Centre, Brunel University. The forum was ‘dedicated to the memory of Kazuo Ohno and the complex convergences/differences between Japanese and Western performative methods’ (event programme). Throughout the event, speakers and participants drew upon the work of Artaud, in particular his Theatre of Cruelty, in relation to butoh. There was a particular focus on theorising Artaud and butoh in relation to digital technology.

in 'Ren-ai Butoh-ha Teiso' ('Foundation of the Dance of Love'). In this piece he choreographed the dancer Tanaka Min; Tanaka went on to use Artaud's recording in subsequent work. I regard the practice of Tanizaki, Artaud, Hijikata, and butoh, as philosophically-informed modes of writing, performing and dancing. I highlight the connections and parallels between them in an attempt to frame my research into notions of self as being rooted in a historical tradition of complex convergences between Japanese and Western performative modes of intervention, as I have similarly illustrated in Chapters One and Three.

Artaud's concept of the Theatre of Cruelty, theorised in *The Theater and its Double* (Artaud, 1958; first published 1938), is where, according to Scheer '... the body without organs is made. It is opposed to all forms, since they are forms of social production, but also opposed to silence and surrender' (Sheer, 2009: 44). Deleuze and Guattari use the BwO in *Anti-Oedipus* (1984) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004) as a name to describe the single substance specific to their own account of materialist monism. The term echoes Spinoza's notion that the full potentiality of the body is not available to us. According to Artaud, cited by Deleuze, 'The body is the body/it stands alone/it has no need of organs/the body is never an organism/organisms are the enemies of bodies' (Deleuze, 2005: 32). Plainly this notion is widely used and overused; however I am returning to it here precisely because of its usefulness in trying to understand and account for Kaitaisha's contemporary practices from within them. The BwO is used to represent the infinite range of potentialities available in a monistic world where Artaud writes as part of a diatribe against certain tendencies in modernism; e.g. a scientific approach to a body that Artaud would rather view as spiritual and indissoluble. The modernist tendency, inasmuch as it follows a scientific principle, aims to dissect the organism to find its smallest meaningful part. The three states ascribed to this body are the 'empty' body, which is passive, and subject to external causes, the 'full' body that creatively and purposively directs and shapes the effects of these causes, and the 'cancerous' body, which has fallen into a calcified, endlessly repetitive, set of behaviours. Deleuze and Guattari's BwO '... is not at all a notion or a concept but a practice, a set of practices. You never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004: 166). They continue to describe the BwO in terms of its unattainability:



Where psychoanalysis says, “Stop, find yourself again,” we should say instead, “Let’s go further still, we haven’t found our BwO yet, we haven’t sufficiently dismantled our self.” Substitute forgetting for anamnesis, experimentation for interpretation. Find your body without organs. Find out how to make it. It’s a question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy. It is where everything is played out. (Ibid: 167)



Figure 39: The plane of consistency: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in performance, Morishita Studio, Tokyo February 2011. Left to right, Matt Beere, Nakajima Miyuki, Elena Polzer, Aleksandra Sliwińska, Aleksandra Kamińska, Hino Hiruko, Mikyoung Jun Pearce, and Katarzyna Pastuszek, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

Such a BwO is viewed as a reservoir of potentials for different patterns of bodily affect, or the point at which anything can become anything else. Deleuze and Guattari describe this place of potential transformations as a *plane of consistency*; ‘A plateau is a piece of immanence. Every BwO is made up of plateaus. Every BwO is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency. The BwO is a component of passage’ (Ibid: 175). The plateaus in the plane of consistency generate a multitude of new connections, becomings, and transitions, as described in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*:

The body without organs is an egg: it is crisscrossed with axes and thresholds, with latitudes and longitudes and geodesic lines, traversed by *gradients* marking the transitions and the becomings, the destinations of the subject developing along these particular vectors. Nothing here is representative; rather, it is all life and lived experience: the actual, lived emotion of having breasts does not resemble breasts, it does not represent them, anymore than a predestined zone in the egg resembles the organ that is going to be stimulated to produce within itself. Nothing but bands of intensity, potentials, thresholds, and gradients. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984: 19)

The notion of the BwO as a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency is useful to consider in terms of the realm of the possible of the complex performer body. Such a notion relates to my embodied experience of performing with Kaitaisha, whereby I have the sense, as I perform with other performer bodies in the space, that a multitude of new connections, becomings, and transitions are being created. In my experience of such an event (as a performer-body) this moment can be seen in terms of *affect*: the ability to affect and be affected, whether this lies, however unevenly or differently, in performance terms, in the performer, the director, or the onlooker. Deleuze and Guattari use this notion in terms of a ‘non-conscious’,<sup>70</sup> experience of intensity, a moment of unformed and unstructured potential. Massumi (translator of *A Thousand Plateaus*) defines their use of the term:

AFFECT/AFFECTION. Neither word denotes a personal feeling (*sentiment* in Deleuze and Guattari). *L’affect* (Spinoza’s *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that bodies capacity to act. *L’affection* (Spinoza’s *affectio*) is each state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include “mental” or ideal bodies). (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004: xvii)

Deleuze states that every human or animal is considered by Spinoza by the affects of which it is capable: ‘Affective capacity, with a maximum threshold and a minimum threshold, is a constant notion in Spinoza’ (Deleuze, 1988b: 124). In affect, intensity is infolded into intensity as the body infolds the context that is transmitted by another

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<sup>70</sup> By using the term ‘non-conscious’, I am aware that I am applying a Freudian model of intelligibility, and questions such as the whereabouts of one’s ‘non-conscious’ come into play in terms of my analysis of self. I do not intend to expand upon such questions here, as I am using the terms notionally; however, I am aware of the presumptions that underpin the Freudian model, and the problematical nature of referring to it.

body (where that other “body” might also be a performance space or an object, and might also extend to the body of spectators).

The affective BwO relates to my embodied Kaitaisha performer-body experience of an intense body operating in an intensive reality. Deleuze expands on this intensive body in his writing on Francis Bacon:

Sensation is vibration. [...] Likewise sensation, when it acquires a body through the organism, takes on an excessive and spasmodic appearance, exceeding the bounds of organic activity. It is immediately conveyed in the flesh through the nervous wave or vital emotion. (Deleuze, 2005: 32 -33)

This description of the ‘nervous wave’, as conveyed in the flesh, relates to the Kaitaisha performer’s technique of focussing on their nervous system as the starting point for movement within their body<sup>71</sup>.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies & Era of the Sick* 2011: ‘Nervous System’]**

Deleuze goes on to draw parallels between Artaud and Bacon:

Bacon and Artaud meet in many points: the figure is the body without organs (dismantle the organism in favor of the body, the face in favour of the head); the body without organs is flesh and nerve; a wave flows through it and traces levels upon it; a sensation is produced when the wave encounters the forces acting on the body, an “affective athleticism,” a scream-breath. When sensation is linked to the body in this way, it ceases to be representative and becomes real; and *cruelty* will be linked less and less to the representation of something horrible, and will become nothing other than the action of forces upon the body, or sensation (the opposite of the sensational). As opposed to a *misérabiliste* painter who paints parts of the organs, Bacon has not ceased to paint bodies without organs, the intensive fact of the body. The scrubbed and brushed parts of the canvas are, in Bacon, parts of a neutralized organism, restored to their

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<sup>71</sup> In my view, Kaitaisha use the term ‘nervous system’ to mean that a performer will move through their choreography with the intention of being moved by the tempo of their own nerves. A Kaitaisha performer using such a technique might move with a frantic energy, as if their body is broken and disjointed one moment and fluid the next.

state of zones or levels: “the human visage has not yet found its face ....”. (Ibid: 33)

I can draw connections here between Deleuze’s account of Bacon’s work, and the Kaitaisha performer body, whereby one experiences the sense of having thresholds or levels, and, in my view, the sense of ‘affective athleticism’. Deleuze’s claim here that ‘when sensation is linked to the body in this way, it ceases to be representative and becomes real’ complicates drawing such a parallel between his notion and the performer body in Kaitaisha, and poses questions regarding the performer self performing representation. I go on to discuss such complexity on page 177 through looking at the actional performer self operating in a complex system.



Figure 40: Artaud’s ‘affective athleticism’: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration  
*Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in rehearsal, Morishita Studio, Tokyo  
February 2011; Kumamoto Kenjiro, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

Such complexity of the body can be traced back to Deleuze’s account of Spinoza’s notion that we do not yet know what a body can do, and that the body can compress in a single moment or movement an enormous range of ‘thoughts’. Spinoza’s view that the

full or potential body is not available to us, as taken up by Deleuze, is echoed by Deleuze and Guattari's BwO; and the physically complex self is useful to draw on in terms of looking at the realm of potential in the body of the performer, as Deleuze and Guattari explain:

After all, is not Spinoza's *Ethics* the great book of the BwO? The attributes are types or genres of BwO's, substances, powers, zero intensities as matrices of production. The modes are everything that comes to pass: waves and vibrations, migrations, thresholds and gradients, intensities produced in a given type of substance starting from a given matrix. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004: 170)

Drawing on Spinoza, Deleuze describes the body as an aeriform container that has the capacity for affecting and being affected:

How does Spinoza define a body? A body, of whatever kind, is defined by Spinoza in two simultaneous ways. In the first place, a body, however small it may be, is composed of an infinite number of particles; it is the relations of motion and rest, of speeds and slowness between particles, that define a body, the individuality of a body. Secondly, a body affects other bodies, or is affected by other bodies; it is this capacity for affecting and being affected that also defines a body in its individuality. (Deleuze, 1988b: 123)

Deleuze goes on to say that 'the kinetic proposition tells us that a body is defined by relations of motion and rest, of slowness and speed between particles' (Ibid: 123). He describes this body as a 'composition of speeds and slowness on a plane of immanence' (Ibid: 123). Spinoza's notion of time and of the unknown capacity of the body is vital to consider with regards to my consideration of the realm of the possible in the performer body, as Deleuze states:

Spinoza's ethics has nothing to do with a morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affected on this plane of immanence. That is why Spinoza calls out to us in the way he does: you do not know beforehand what a body or mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination. (Ibid: 125)

Through Spinoza's writing, Deleuze poses important questions that I suggest we consider in relation to the performer-self in the performance space, where I am concerned with a self that is experienced by the performer, rather than projected by a spectator:

But now it is a question of knowing whether relations (and which ones?) can compound directly to form a new, more "extensive" relation, or whether

capacities can compound directly to constitute a more “intense” capacity or power ... How do individuals enter into composition with one another in order to form a higher individual, ad infinitum? (Ibid: 126)

The Spinozan notion (in Deleuze) of individuals engaging on a plane of immanence of speeds and rest in composition with one another, can be applied to my reading of Massumi’s writing on proprioception, as I discuss below, and the performer body. This reading of the performer body relates to the Kaitaisha *murekehai* (pack) sensation (see page 180), where the performer extends their sensory awareness to the space and other performers, their actions subject to the presence of others; it also relates to the Kaitaisha performer operating through Bergson’s *le devenir* (duration), which I go on to discuss in detail in this chapter (page 172).

## **The Body without an Image**

### **i. Proprioception**

Following such a notion of affect as experienced in my practice with Kaitaisha, Massumi’s writing on proprioception (perception as governed by proprioceptors) is relevant as he describes the unconscious sensory flow within the body and between bodies. In his writing on the body in the pure event, Massumi explains the other modes of perception (besides optical effect) that are relevant to the ‘body without an image’:

The spatiality of the body without an image can be understood even more immediately as an effect of *proprioception*, defined as the sensibility proper to the muscles and ligaments as opposed to tactile sensibility (which is “exteroceptive”) and visceral sensibility (which is “interoceptive”). Tactility is the sensibility of the skin as surface of contact between the perceiving subject and the perceived object. Proprioception folds tactility into the body, enveloping the skin’s contact with the external world in a dimension of medium depth: between epidermis and viscera. The muscles and ligaments register as conditions of movement what the skin internalizes as qualities: the hardness of the floor underfoot as one looks into a mirror becomes a resistance enabling station and movement; the softness of a cat’s fur becomes a lubricant for the motion of the hand. Proprioception translates the exertions and ease of the body’s encounters with objects into a muscle memory of relationality. This is the cumulative memory of skill, habit, posture. At the same time as proprioception folds tactility in, it draws out the subject’s reactions to the qualities of the objects it perceives through all five senses, bringing them into the motor realm of externalizable response. (Massumi, 2002: 58 - 9)

Massumi describes here three levels of sensorial perception, and how they act to produce our perceived experience of reality, naming them as the exteroceptive, proprioceptive, and interoceptive senses. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a proprioceptor as:

Any sensory structure which receives stimuli arising within the tissues (other, usually, than the viscera); *esp.* one concerned with the sense of position and movement of a part of the body...

**1927** HALDANE & HUXLEY *Animal Biol.* v. 123 Proprioceptive organs may affect the consciousness. Thus we can tell how much our knee is bent even with our eyes shut, owing to the joint-organs, or how great a weight we are holding, owing to the muscle-organs. (Simpson and Weiner, 1989: 656)

Massumi describes proprioception as translating ‘the exertion and ease of the body’s encounters with objects into a muscular memory of relationality’ (Massumi, 2002: 59). An exteroceptor is a sense organ that receives external stimuli, hence taste, touch, smell, sound and vision, and is thus likely to contribute to sense memory drawn on by a performer and possibly, albeit differently, by a spectator. An interoceptor is a ‘sensory receptor which receives stimuli arising within the body’ (Simpson and Weiner, 1989: 1126), and it ‘immediately registers excitations gathered by the five exteroceptive senses even before they are fully processed by the brain’ (Massumi, 2002: 60), hence interoception is both characterized by, and a manifestation of, the body’s temporality. Through these three forms of perception, the individual engages with experience and with different forms of subject-object relations.

Massumi’s account for perception is importantly concerned with sensation, and proprioception exists through movement, and within the *event*. The self registers movement on a proprioceptive level, and orients itself in space through these movements, as Massumi states: ‘The way we orient is more like a tropism (tendency plus habit) than a cognition (visual form plus configuration)’ (Ibid: 180). This does suggest that a choreographer or performance director’s engagement, which in my view is predominantly visual, is not fully or even meaningfully shared by a performer, although the former’s experience of performing might modulate the dominant visual experience. Proprioceptive perception of movement is thus seen within this analysis as providing a more effective orientation device than visual orientation. This provides a very important response to Lacan’s image of the fragmented body-in-bits and pieces, which is created by the infant’s fantasy of a mastered body during the mirror stage, as it

prioritizes visual perception over tactile and kinaesthetic information<sup>72</sup>. Through his writing on proprioceptive perception, Massumi illustrates how the physically complex body is full of unknown potentiality, and we can see from this how perception is both complex and internally differentiated. In addition, we may suppose that a trained dancer has the ability to anticipate the visual implications of her movement choices, because she has viewed some of these implications in the circumstances of training either literally, in the mirrored wall of the rehearsal studio, or in the look of the choreographer or another performer. In this case, however, the visual is secondary to other modes of perception in the making. There is plainly a *measure* of movement revealed in figure 41 (page 165, Hino Hiruko and Aota Reiko, photo Miyauchi Katsu), which is effected by each performer individually, and it is equally relationally specific. What we see at work here is the performers' judgement, which is part of their expertise (as discussed in detail by Melrose, 2011).

## ii. Butoh Body and Transformation

In *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* Massumi describes the substanceless and durationless moment of the 'pure event' (Massumi, 2002: 57), whereby individuals engage on a plane of immanence of speeds and rest in composition with one another. The body in this event is also described as the 'body without an image':

The body without an image is an accumulation of relative perspectives and the passages between them, an additive space of utter receptivity retaining and combining past movements, in intensity, extracted from their actual terms. It is less a space in the empirical sense than a gap in space that is also a suspension of the normal unfolding of time. Still, it can be understood as having a spatiotemporal order of its own.

In its spatial aspect, the body without an image is the involution of subject-object relations into the body of the observer and of that body into itself. (Ibid)

Massumi names this experience of the body as *quasi corporeality*, which is an appropriation of the BwO, and suggests a complex system that we might want to

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<sup>72</sup> As Lacan elaborates in 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* as revealed in psychoanalytic experience' (Lacan: 2006). Elaborating on Lacan and Western subjectivity further is beyond the scope of my project.



approach in diagrammatic terms, such as those often implicitly engaged with by expert choreographers. Massumi's account of the substanceless and durationless moment of the pure event is highly useful when thinking about what I have experienced as possible in my practicing performer-body and in the Kaitaisha or butoh body. Following on from Deleuze on Spinoza, Massumi's quasi corporeality offers a complex model for the performing body (or equally, the performing-body offers Massumi a model for quasi corporeality), which I suggest can potentially be witnessed and experienced in the Kaitaisha or butoh body, as that body occupies a gap in space and in a suspension of linear time<sup>73</sup>. Massumi describes quasi corporeality as an *abstract map of transformation*, whereby, as I understand it, the body exists in a spatiotemporal order of its own, outside of the normal unfolding of time. In quasi corporeality the spatiality of the body without an image is constituted and translated into another time. In my view this relates to the notion of transformation as practiced by the Kaitaisha performer, or butoh dancer.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004), Deleuze and Guattari use the phrase 'plane of consistency' to describe a place where everything exists in a state of consistency and can therefore be transformed into anything else; in such a place, the body is in flux, unfixed, and with infinite potentialities, suggesting the appeal of the Deleuze and Guattari formulation to some dance practitioner-researchers, and having particular relevance to the notion of transformation as understood by the butoh dancer. Notions of potential transformation and metamorphosis are a signature of butoh dance, with the dancer often attempting to embody imagery or sensation. This notion moves beyond representation or imitation, as can be seen in Hijikata's signature notion that one can become other than oneself through the pursuit of transformation (Fraleigh & Nakamura, 2006). In the Kaitaisha performance 'At a Fortress' (Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, 2007) Marlene Jöbstl, a French butoh dancer guest performing with the company, moved across the space uttering "I am an empty body, a body without organs, a corpse"; her face was blank and tears fell down her cheeks. The dancer stated that she had 'emptied' her body in order to become a vessel for images that were 'passing through' it (Jöbstl, private conversation, February 2007). Butoh dancers similarly, in my

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<sup>73</sup> This claim of quasi corporeality in the Kaitaisha or butoh body is subjective and rooted in my own experience of such a body as both a performer and spectator; other performer and spectator experiences may be various and different.

experience, consider their bodies to move thorough states of dissolution: for instance, in Hijikata's 'Ash Pillar' process, dancers become pillars of ash (as discussed by Baird, 2005: 102). The image that a dancer performing 'Ash Pillar' works with, is of a human sacrifice that has been utterly consumed by fire so all that remains is ash, ready to crumble; what remains is a form bereft of any animating principle. In practice, as I have witnessed and experienced it<sup>74</sup> the performer works with the image of an 'empty' body, constituted of ash, which allows them to move, or collapse to the floor gradually, as if their body is broken and disjointed. This process draws certain parallels with the Kaitaisha practice of 'carrying', as I go on to discuss (page 163). The 'Ash Pillar Walk' is a movement that Hijikata compares to the walk death row inmates make towards their execution (Ibid: 102), as detailed on page 163. On other occasions, Hijikata asked his students to 'dissolve into nothingness' through their dancing; this notion of emptiness corresponds to a certain approach to the performer body, which I have experienced in the Kaitaisha practice of 'carrying', but also in relation to how I sense that I am represented in their performances as an 'empty vessel', in terms of Plato's notion of *chora*, as I discuss in Chapter Five (page 224).

The butoh body, accordingly, is something unfixed, porous, and unfinished, and can extend beyond or recede from the empirical 'body' - an apt description for it is 'the body without boundaries'. According to Ohno Kazuo, the butoh dancer does not simply offer a pre-formed symbolization or representation of the image s/he dances. Instead, because it involves going beneath the surface of everyday life, in order to 'express the soul with purity' (Viala and Sekine, 1988: 94), she must *embody* the image she dances. To embody an image supposes an interesting process, since it offers a pre-existing

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<sup>74</sup> During a workshop led by butoh dancer Endo Tadashi (London Butoh Festival, 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2009) in which I participated, the workshop participants were led through the 'ash pillar' process. Prior to the process, we were given a partner exercise where we were asked to stand back to back and whilst giving each other impulses - through the various points in our backs – we repeatedly collapsed to the floor and rose to standing, becoming increasingly frantic in the speed and intensity of our movements. Eventually, Endo instructed us to stop whilst in a collapsed position, and after a pause, to stand and look at the imprint of our body on the floor (partly imagined, and partly sweat-stained). We were then instructed to stand as if we were empty; Endo gave us the image that every particle of our body was constituted of cigarette ash, and once we had fully engaged with this image, he gave us another image (in the form of an instruction) of a slight gust of wind entering the space, which caused the ash to gradually crumble. As I worked through this image I gained a heightened awareness of my (exhausted) body, and when the 'gust of wind' image was given I gradually began to collapse towards the floor, visualizing my body as a slowly crumbling pile of ash.

image (or ideal) to which the body is lent, rather than vice-versa. According to Sondra Fraleigh and Nakamura Tamah (Fraleigh & Nakamura, 2006: 50), the Japanese philosophers Yuasa Yasuo and Ichikawa Hiroshi's concept of the body as 'unfinished potential' and 'body as spirit', together lend a philosophical framework which helps us to understand the metamorphic nature of Hijikata's butoh:

... butoh dancers deconstruct the physical in morphing from image to image and projecting the body toward nothingness; theirs is not an ethereal escape from the body as in the classic ballet of the West. It is a transformative process that accepts change, just as nature (human and non-human) is also a study in time and space, decay, death, and regeneration. (Ibid: 50)

For this reason, Hijikata danced the butoh body primarily not *from technique*, as he explains, but rather, from a particular state where:

We shake hands with the dead, who send us encouragement beyond our body; this is the unlimited power of BUTO. In our body history, something is hiding in our subconscious, collected in our unconscious body, which will appear in each detail of our expression. Here we can rediscover time with an elasticity, sent by the dead. We can find Buto, in the same way we can touch our hidden reality, something can be born, and can appear, living and dying in the moment. (Ibid: 50)

'Butoh body' can be translated from the Japanese as 'butoh-tai'. However 'tai' in butoh is not the physical, empirical body; rather it is a state of mind, understood by Japanese butoh performers as a mental-physical attitude, whereby both aspects are interconnected. 'Butoh-tai' aims to avoid objectifying the body; for example, it avoids any objectifying awareness a ballet dancer might have of her or his body as they view themselves in the mirror whilst training. The objectification of the body in ballet, whereby the ballet dancer observes herself in the mirror and refers to a mental conception of the ideal dancer, is discussed by Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull: 'as a dancer moves, she or he carries a mental picture of the perfect performance of each step, comparing the mirrored image with that ideal' (Cohen Bull, 1997: 272). The scrutinised dancer body is internalised as an imprint of perfection (or rather, as an impossible perfection), to be echoed, generally inadequately, by the body itself, and in this sense the dancer's sense of self is more often a sense of inadequacy. As I received my formative dance training in ballet, I can account for such an experience of an internal imprint of perfection, echoed by my own inadequacy. Equally, I would argue that in the mirror image the dancer senses her body to be 'in bits and pieces'; in Lacanian terms

(Lacan, 2006), where she experiences the self-that-perceives as separate from the self-perceived, she experiences herself as divorced from the whole of the body or 'self'. Hence, in these distinct but connected perceptions the dancer experiences both a desire for the connected whole of the self and the desire for individual perfection.

According to Kasai Toshiharu the way in which a butoh dancer starts dancing is key to the concept of 'butoh-tai':

'Butoh-tai' comprises this mental-physical attitude towards him/herself and also towards the field or the environment in which the performer exists. There are four basic categories of the mind-body set concerning movements: 1) the subject starts movements, 2) the environment and/or internal mechanisms starts the person's movements, 3) both the subject and the environment/ internal mechanisms co-operate and start movements, 4) the self and the environment and the movements are not separated. (Kasai, 2000: 353-60)

Kasai continues to discuss the objectifying function of consciousness in terms of the dichotomy of the objectified target and the objectified subject, with the body utilised as a tool by the subject. In butoh, rather than regarding the dancer as the performing subject, Kasai sees the space itself as dancing; he views the dancer as being 'created' by the space. This relates to the Kaitaisha notion of space-time, where the performer embodies the space, and vice versa, as I go on to discuss.

If one takes these descriptions (of both ballet and butoh) of embodiment and subject/object relations to be non-metaphoric, this appears to have significant consequences for what we take to mean by the 'self' of the performer. According to Kasai, in an 'ideal' butoh performance, 'what the audience sees is not the performer's body but a non-materialized world as if the performer's body becomes a prism and allows the audience to see something latent behind the performer' (Ibid). The performer, he argues, will have had a corresponding 'dream-like' experience of performing. According to Kasai, this *disassociation* of the performer's self is 'at the core of "butoh-tai"' (Ibid). This raises questions about where the butoh performer's self is actually located: might it be suspended or deferred? Secondly, what sort of relationship does the self have with the body; and thirdly, how should one characterise this 'self'?

Kaitaisha, following from the butoh notion of 'metamorphosis', perform what they call a 'transformation'. Shimizu explains that in 'transformation', a Kaitaisha performer will

move with the notion that her or his environment is moving them, and concurrently, their surroundings are reflected on the surface of their body, and separate bodies ‘float’ on the surface of their skin. As I discussed in Chapter Three, (page 133), this Kaitaisha notion of transformation is a response to the Foucauldian notion of ‘docile’ bodies (Foucault, 1977: 136 – 8), where the contemporary body has been conditioned (through its productive functions – recalling Artaud’s revolt), and where its primary composition is not that of a discrete ‘self’ but instead that of a unified collection of images which direct the body as if it were in a trance<sup>75</sup>.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* 2010: ‘Transformation as technique’]**

In ‘From Being Jealous of a Dog’s Vein’ Hijikata describes what he means by transformation:

I have transformed myself again and again into a strange and brutal musical instrument that does not even sweat and I live my life turning a stick of silence beating on silence into a shinbone. I have transformed myself too into an empty chest of draws and a gasping willow trunk. I have also seen ghosts doing sumō [wrestling] in a parlor and I have been able any number of times to create a baby who picks up their bones and bleeds at the nose. One day an evil wind, like a beautiful woman, came moving in a clot, and when it touched me there on my head I, too, hardened into a lump. (Hijikata, T., 2000a: 59)

In practice – and this echoes my own experience - such an abstract notion is difficult to grasp and to embody, as Kurihara Nanako effectively describes in her experience of a butoh class:

...one had to “be it,” not merely “imagine it.” This was emphasized in the class again and again. The condition of the body itself has to be changed. Through words, Hijikata’s method makes dancers conscious of their physiological senses

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<sup>75</sup> This description of transformation, given by Shimizu, was recorded in my working notebook in 2004 (*Dream Regime* collaborations, Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, and Broellin Schloss, Germany).

and teaches them to objectify their bodies. Dancers can “reconstruct” their bodies as material things in the world and even as concepts. By practicing the exercises repeatedly, dancers learn to manipulate their own bodies physiologically and psychologically. As a result, butoh dancers can transform themselves into everything from a wet rug to a sky and can even embody the universe, theoretically speaking. (Kurihara, N., 2000: 16)<sup>76</sup>

The method that Kurihara describes is Hijikata’s ‘butoh-fu’, a form of notation whereby a series of word images are interpreted and embodied by the dancer to create movement, which I introduced as a technique in the SMU project, as I discussed in Chapter Two. Hijikata’s notations were often taken from images, such as paintings, and were written in a poetic form:

a person composed of particle and tactile sensation  
his skull is packed with branches  
small branches in his head snap  
a bird flies from his temple  
an extending neck  
a slug crawling along his backbone  
a flying grasshopper  
a stick  
a sunflower  
a forehead  
a puddle in the sole of the foot  
insects in space  
people melted in furnaces in Auschwitz  
grass turning pale.  
(Hijikata, T., 2000b: 61)<sup>77</sup>

Hijikata emphasised that such exercises should only be seen as a condition for forming a body, as he was aware that the development of movement through the use of such notation could create a rhythm or a pattern in the dancer’s body, which is what he was seeking to avoid. The state that Hijikata was trying to create in the body (and beyond the body to the other elements in the space, and the space itself) was of the dancer existing in another realm, in a state of suspension at the extreme edge of existence, and this, in my view, relates to Massumi’s quasi corporeality. Hijikata describes a body in such a suspended state:

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<sup>76</sup> The images of a ‘wet rug’ or an ‘ash pillar’ are images commonly used by butoh practitioners to transform the body.

<sup>77</sup> This example from his *Scrapbook for Butoh* (circa 1970) appeared alongside an unidentified painting, the page was entitled *Zaishitsu hen II Fōtorie* (On Material II Fautrier), so the image that the butoh-fu is drawn from may have been by the French painter, illustrator and printmaker Jean Fautrier.

A criminal on death row made to walk to the guillotine is already a dead person even as he clings, to the very end, to life. The fierce antagonism between life and death is pushed to the extreme and cohesively expressed in this lone miserable being who, in the name of the law, is forced into an unjust condition. A person not walking but made to walk; a person not living but made to live; a person not dead but made to be dead must, in spite of such total passivity, paradoxically expose the radical vitality of human nature .... This very condition is the original form of dance and it is my task to create just such a condition on the stage. (Hijikata, T., 2000c: 46)

As Maria Pia D'Orazi states in “‘Body of Light’: The Way of the Butô Performer’, such a state of suspension and transformation is what Hijikata described as butoh’s ‘...attempt to expose dance inside the body’ (Pia D’Orazi, 2001: 339). The butoh body incurs space and the dancer follows the speed and the rhythm of their own bodies, creating, in my view, something akin to the space and time of Massumi’s pure event. Yet, the butoh dancer can attempt to reach the pure event time and not necessarily achieve it, for such an abstract and unquantifiable state is difficult (if even possible) to create, as Hijikata states:

What I dance there is nowhere even near the “butohification” of experience, much less the mastery of butoh. I want to become and be a body with its eyes just open wide, a body tensed to the snapping point in response to the majestic landscape around it. Not that I think it is better at such a time not to look at my own body, but my regret at having looked at it is also numbed and I am unable to allow my hapless body to bud. (Hijikata, T., 2000a: 59)

The Kaitaisha performers’ embodiment of transformation relates to Hijikata’s notion of ‘the body with its eyes just wide open’, as the performer attempts to transform their body, and extend this sense beyond themselves, attempting to become both the space itself (as they allow the space to inhabit them) and inhuman. As Shimizu has observed in conversation<sup>78</sup>, the Kaitaisha sense of transformation is about embodying a certain quality of time and the sensation that different qualities of time are moving simultaneously. A process of ‘transformation’ might begin with the performer working with a company technique called ‘carrying’<sup>79</sup> as a way of holding and moving their ‘empty’ body. From an observer perspective, one would witness the performer gazing ahead and walking slowly, their arms by their sides, carefully placing one foot in front

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<sup>78</sup> As recorded in working notebooks (2004 – 2011) whilst collaborating with Kaitaisha.

<sup>79</sup> I have observed and participated in the practice of ‘carrying’ in my work with Kaitaisha since 2004.

of the other. The performer visualises two forces of gravity both pushing down and pushing up, and senses a connection at their centre where the two forces meet: this centre then extends outwards, and the performer follows this, twisting from their centre, with no predetermined sense of the direction in which they will move. The performer works here with the sensation that they are *being carried*, whilst their body is the form left behind, and they are a couple of feet ahead; whatever the performer sees becomes absorbed in them, so the eyes and the whole body are reflecting rather than merely seeing. It is from such a starting point of emptiness that the Kaitaisha performer attempts to transform.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *Dream Regime: Faithful Bodies & Era of the Sick* 2011: ‘Carrying’]**

I first witnessed what Kaitaisha mean by transformation through Hino’s demonstration of the sequence ‘Sea-dog’ in 2004<sup>80</sup>, this sequence has since been taught to and performed by myself in Kaitaisha performances, and I shall attempt to account for my experience of it<sup>81</sup>:

*I hiss through clenched teeth and a distorted mouth, my shoulder vibrates as my right arm extends shaking and twisting behind my body. I have the sensation of my body as a constantly extending and compressed coil as I move forwards and backwards on the stage, crouching towards the floor, and extending upwards on my toes, twisting my body through my hips from left to right. I visualise the seashore and a child playing with her dog. I sense the child, the sea, and the dog passing through my body, and as*

<sup>80</sup> During the first *Dream Regime* residency (Chapter Theatre, Cardiff, 2004), Kaitaisha demonstrated a number of their techniques and performance etudes, including ‘sea-dog’.

<sup>81</sup> This account of ‘sea-dog’ is taken from my experience of performing it in various Kaitaisha performances 2005 – 2011 and on my notebook entries from these projects. I account for my experience of it in order to attempt to illuminate my sensed and felt experience of the practice.



*the waves move back and forth I become absorbed by these elements and transform into them. I continue with my movement, the hissing escaping from my mouth as my body violently vibrates and twists. Eventually my arm is thrown forwards and my body follows, and as I collapse towards the floor, I have the sense that I have been ‘absorbed by the horizon’<sup>82</sup>. The hissing gradually stops.*



Figure 41: ‘Sea-dog’ as performed by Aota Reiko: Gekidan Kaitaisha *Bye Bye Reflection* in performance, Owl Spot, Toshima Performing Arts Centre, Tokyo, March 2008. Left to right, Hino Hiruko and Aota Reiko, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution* 2010: ‘Sea Dog’]**

<sup>82</sup> Hino taught me the ‘sea-dog’ sequence in December 2005. She instructed me to ‘see the horizon’, and sense that I am seen by it, and absorbed by it (as recorded in my working notebook).

As I move through this sequence I aim to *become* the scene, rather than acting or representing it. The account of this sequence, and my embodied sense of transformation, is based on what I have experienced as both a performer and a spectator of ‘sea-dog’; I cannot account for what a spectator viewing me perform such a sequence might experience, and this is the complex system complication that I later expand upon. Initially, when the sea-dog sequence (as preceded by another movement sequence) was taught to me in December 2005 I struggled with understanding what my intention should be as a performer, and company member Nakajima Miyuki<sup>83</sup> gave me the following instructions, which take a similar form to Hijikata’s *butoh-fu*:

An abandoned doll at a dump. Stand upright, step forward, stop at a point. One arm rises up towards the sky like a greeting; the arm is cut off from the shoulder. Turn and step forwards again, stop at the second point. The arms rises up again, sound of leaves come to my ears and make me turn, when the arm is cut off I hear the sound. At the same moment a crow flies away from a tree, become absorbed in the crow flying, my goal is to reach the crow, at that moment the crow falls down into my body, my body reaches it and transforms into the crow. I am watched by the sky, from one side to another, and then I find sand in the earth. On moving I grab the sand but every grain falls down to the earth, as if every cell escapes from my palm, the hollow of my hands. At the same time the sound of ripples falls on my ears, the sound makes me become a child. A wave is going out; it pulls me towards the sea. Next another wave is coming, I step forward towards the shore feeling it on my back, at that moment I transform into a dog, and I bare my fangs. The sound of ripples escapes from my mouth. Gradually I become small, falling down on the earth. I send out my goal/double and then a limb emerges from the centre of my body one after another. Limbs are those of an animal, move forward on four limbs. At that moment I become a human and move to two legs, not a human but a doll again. At the moment when I step forward I collapse onto the earth. (Nakajima, handwritten note: December 2005)

As is illustrated by these instructions, the Kaitaisha notion of transformation is highly influenced by Hijikata’s desire to transform into an object, element, or animal<sup>84</sup>. As former company member Adam Broinowski points out in ‘Gekidan Kaitaisha – Bye Bye: The New primitive (2011) – Theatre of the body and cultural deconstruction’ (Broinowski, 2010: 147), Shimizu’s transformation is close to Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of becoming ‘inhumanity’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004: 189-90)<sup>85</sup>. Indeed,

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<sup>83</sup> Nakajima is a core company member and has performed with Kaitaisha for (approximately) 20 years.

<sup>84</sup> Hino was trained by Hijikata and, as choreographer and core company member, her training has had an important influence on Kaitaisha.

<sup>85</sup> Deleuze’s writing has influenced Shimizu’s work, which he has discussed at length in discussions that I have participated in (2004 – 2012).

Deleuze and Guattari's statement that 'Yes, the face has a great future, but only if it is destroyed, dismantled' (Ibid: 190) can be read in terms of Hijikata and Shimizu's aim of becoming inhuman through transformation. What is of interest to my query into the physically complex actional self is how Massumi's 'body without an image' that is an 'involution of subject-object relations into the body of the observer and of that body into itself' (Massumi, 2002: 57), relates to what Broinowski describes as Kaitaisha's transformation as a 'becoming space', inhabiting and being inhabited rather than occupying, and informed by material complexity. The performer is object and subject, passive and active, going out into the body to allow space in' (Broinowski, 2010: 147). Such a performer body, as Broinowski describes (and I have experienced), exists in Massumi's pure event time, and it recalls Deleuze's borrowing of Bergson's notion of *le devenir*, as I go on to discuss.

### **Late twentieth century theoretical approaches to the body**

I want at this point to move away from butoh, and consider several late twentieth century writers and their theoretical approaches to the body. A close examination of the work of Foucault is beyond the scope of this project, however, I would like to briefly turn to performance and dance writer Andre Lepecki, who states that, according to Foucault (1980a):

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally impregnated by history and the process of history's destruction of the body. (Lepecki, 2004: 31)

According to Helen Thomas (2003: 44), the body is central to Foucault's critique of history, which he views as an unfinished and unstable entity, produced through a range of practices and productive in "constructing resistances". In his early publication, *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault traces the history of the body as a target of penal repression (Ibid: 46). He identifies the emergence of what he calls 'bio-power' from the eighteenth century onwards, whereby others use the subject's body as an object of the control and manipulation of the subject, recalling Shimizu's theory of the body as discussed in Chapter Three (page 131). Foucault describes disciplinary

technologies in prisons, factories, and schools as aiming to produce a ‘docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved’ (Foucault, 1980b: 198). Pierre Bourdieu views the body as an unfinished entity, inscribed and invested with power, and produced by acts of labour that inform the way in which the body develops. He saw individual bodies as having histories, but these histories as not entirely of their own construction (Bourdieu, 1984).

From these briefest of notional accounts, we might begin to conclude that a popular view of the body is that it is both unfinished and unstable. Massumi has observed more recently that:

The body does not just absorb pulses of discrete simulations; it infolds contexts, it infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated. Intensity is asocial, but not presocial – it includes social elements but mixes them with elements belonging to another level of functioning and combines them according to different logic. How can this be so? Only if the trace of past actions, including a trace of their contexts, were conserved in the brain and in the flesh, but out of mind and out of body understood as qualifiable interiors, active and passive respectively, direct spirit and dumb matter... They are tendencies in other words, pastness opening directly onto a future, but with no present to speak of. For the present is lost with the missing half second, passing too quickly to be perceived, too quickly, actually, to have happened. (Massumi, 2002: 30)

In this sense, Massumi describes the body, along the lines of Hayles (*How We Became Posthuman*, 1999) and others, as ‘virtual’, and he introduces the useful notion of what he calls the ‘body-self’. He views the Western ideal of the body as flawed in its desire to view the body as a static, inanimate object, and in its failure to account for its capacity for movement; he thus highlights the incorporeal dimension of the body, recalling, in doing so, Artaud. Massumi refers to the work of Stelarc, in for example ‘Ping Body’ (1996), whereby internet activity composes and choreographs the performance of a body that is plugged into the mass of information, again recalling Shimizu’s theory of the body as discussed in Chapter Three (page 135), specifically in terms of the ‘Phantom Pain’ technique as emerged from the thesis of ‘physicalism’. Massumi describes the body as being made into both a subject and an object simultaneously by the cyber network:

Of course, the body is always and asymmetrically both a subject and an object. But in normal human mode, it is subject for itself and an object for others. Here, it is a subject and an object for itself – self-referentially... The body-self has been plugged into an extended network. As fractal subject-object, the body is the network – a self-network. (Massumi, 2002: 127)

Massumi also refers to the ‘body present’ as being:

in a dissolve: out of what it is just ceasing to be, into what it will already have become by the time it registers that something has happened. The past smudges the past and the future. It is more like an echo of its having just past. The past and the future resonate in the present. Together: as a dopplered will-have-been registering in the instant as a unity of movement. The past and the future are in continuity with each other, in a moving-through-the-present: in transition. (Ibid: 200)

On this basis, we can see that the resulting ‘future-past’ continually moves through the ‘present’ body, drawing on the body’s ability to remember and change based in its pastness. Massumi sees the body coinciding with its potential, hence echoing Spinoza’s notion of the body with infinite potentialities. Massumi highlights Bergson’s insight into the past and future as continuous dimensions running in parallel to the present. Deleuze notes that ‘the present would never “pass” if it did not have a dimension of “passness” or pastness to fold aspects of itself into as it folds out others into what will have presently been its futurity’ (Ibid: 200) – hence, like memory, its importance is durational. According to Massumi, the body therefore coincides with the ‘twisted continuity of its variations, registered in an endless Doppler loop’ (Ibid: 200). I go on to further develop the notion of the body in relation to time and Bergson’s *le devenir*.

Given a monist account of the world, in which the connection between the body and the self appears not to be contingent but is instead necessary, I want to argue that the account one offers for the body appears to be decisive in shaping one’s concept of what can be understood by the self of the performer. These alternative accounts of the body raise a number of corresponding questions about the self: does the self indeed have a unified form? How does it relate to this body? How does it stand in relation to the self of the other? How should we understand its duration, continuity, and contiguity? They equally raise the possibility, of particular interest to artist-researchers, of an alternative, non-substance based dualism *within* this monist account, where the self is independent of any particular physical circumstances. According to Massumi, the western idea of the body as static object is flawed; but my question at this point is whether his criticism can be extended to include the traditional western notion of the self as an autonomous uniting principal that underlies all subjective experience, housed in a discrete corporeal body? Reflecting Massumi’s criticism of the flawed western ideal of the body as static, Thomas argues that dance as a somatic mode of attention, by which she means a

phenomenological approach that engages reflexively with the body in movement and stillness, has been largely ignored by the academic community (Thomas, 2003: 63). Thomas appears to be concerned that dance writing focuses solely on either the outer, appearing, social body, or the inner, experiential body, but fails to provide any notion of the body as transcending these categories.

A growing interest in kinaesthesia in dance studies has highlighted the presence of kinaesthetic empathy not only in the dancer but also in the dance spectator. A recent study into acquired motor skills used expert dancers to ask the question of whether our minds simulate making an action when we observe someone performing an action (Calvo-Merino et al, 2005: 1243). The study compared the brain activity when dancers watched their own dance style versus another dance style (ballet and capoeira) to reveal the influence of motor expertise on action observation. In contemporary dance this motor expertise, described as ‘muscle memory’, is considered one of the more valuable forms of memory for the dancer; the notion is that after practice and repetition of specific physical movements the body will remember the moves for years, and the dancer can perform them automatically, without conscious thought (Zaleski, 1999: 57). The ballet dancer’s frequently performed repeated movements can be seen in these terms to be ‘automatic’, with no conscious thought required. A common explanation, widely given in the literature, is that there is no separation between the thought and the execution of the movement. As Maxine Sheets-Johnstone states, ‘what is essential is a nonseparation of thinking and doing, and that the very ground of this nonseparation is the capacity, indeed, the very experience of the dancer, to be thinking in movement’ (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981: 400).

The results of the kinaesthetic empathy study described a ‘mirror system’, which integrates observed actions of others with an individual’s personal motor repertoire, suggesting that the brain understands actions by motor simulation and that, according to Jeannerod (1994) when we watch someone performing an action, our brains may simulate the performance of the action we observe. Hence, actions belonging to the motor repertoire of the observed dancer are argued to be seen to be mapped on the observer’s own motor system via the brain. This analysis is hypothetical; Haggard (2005) suggests, in fact, that an *expert-dancer-observer* experiences the same thing as

the dancer watched, if trained in the same dance mode, but does not if he or she is differently trained.

Although such accounts offer interesting insights into how a dancer can think *through* the body<sup>86</sup> and how memory, as an essential trait of self, can appear to extend beyond one corporeal body<sup>87</sup>, they also appear to impose a radical limitation of the possibilities available to the body as envisaged in the BwO, because primacy is given in such accounts to a conception of the world that takes the ‘brain activity’ of a corporeal empirical body as the sole location of thought and the self. What one takes ‘the body’ to mean in dance theory therefore has important consequences for how one conceives of the ‘self’ of the performer.

In terms of kinaesthetic empathy, what is of interest to me are the creative choices that are intuitively determined *through* such empathy, and the notion that a performer’s gesture triggers an experientially based equivalent in the onlooker’s mind. In terms of the intercultural performance making that I discuss here, I question whether the value of such a gesture is culturally specific and therefore what this might equivalently trigger in the mind of performers and audience members from different cultures. For example, as I go on to discuss in detail in Chapter Five, during a Kaitaisha performance of ‘Tokyo Ghetto’ in Zagreb, Croatia in 1996, an audience member tried to intervene and stop a male performer repeatedly hitting a female performer on her naked back. Shimizu has reflected that Japanese audience members have responded very differently to this sequence, in that they have commented on the ‘beauty’ of the red handprint-shaped mark that remained on the female performers back, and that the pattern reminded them of a butterfly.

In my view, such responses are culturally specific, where audience members from post-civil-war Zagreb will regard the gesture in a different way, or it will kinaesthetically trigger something different, to a Japanese audience member, who, in their daily life, might practice restraint<sup>88</sup>. Shimizu has described the Croatian incident during ‘Tokyo

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<sup>86</sup> Using what dancers refer to as ‘muscle memory’ (Zaleski, 1999).

<sup>87</sup> Mapped on the motor repertoire of an observed dancer (Jeannerod, (1994) in Carvo-Marino et al., 2005).

<sup>88</sup> Here I acknowledge that by describing Japanese individuals as ‘restrained’ I am making a generalising statement. However, based on my experience of Japan and discussions with Japanese colleagues and friends, I would suggest that being restrained and suppressing emotion

Ghetto' in terms of being a '*jouissance*' moment, as I go on to discuss, and I suggest here that it perhaps offered Shimizu a sense of liberation to witness a gesture such as this as triggering something in Croatian audience members that is different to what it might trigger in his Japanese audiences. I suggest that through some of the signature Kaitaisha practices that I have discussed, such as the violent moments of contact in *murekehai*, or the repeated chants of 'Of Power', Shimizu is attempting to 'trigger' something in his audiences, yet such gestures are perhaps gestures that Japanese audiences are unable to respond to. In these terms, I am curious as to what exactly my performative gestures kinaesthetically trigger in a Japanese audience member - a research subject, however, that lies beyond the parameters of the present study.

### **The Physically Complex Actional Self: *Le devenir***

Clearly, the Kaitaisha and butoh performer body that I have located within Massumi's notion of the body without an image raises certain questions about time and event.

Massumi describes the quasi corporeal body as existing in 'another kind of time':

The quasi corporeal can be thought of as the superposition of the sum total of the relative perspectives in which the body has been implicated, as object or subject, plus the passages between them: in other words, as an interlocking of overlaid perspectives that nevertheless remain distinct. The involution of space renders these relative perspectives absolute: it registers movement as included disjunction. Subject, object, and their successive emplacements in empirical space are subtracted, leaving the pure relationality of process. Quasi corporeality is an abstract *map* of transformation. Its additive subtraction simultaneously constitutes the spatiality of the body without an image and translates it into another kind of time. For pure relationality extracted from its terms can be understood, at the extreme, as a time out of space, a measureless gap in and between bodies and things, an incorporeal interval of change.

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is a characteristic that is common to the Japanese individual as encouraged through education and social structures. This characteristic can be traced to the concept or 'virtue' of '*Gaman*' (or *gamanzuyoi*), a Japanese term originating from Zen Buddhism, which can be translated as the act of enduring something unbearable with patience and dignity. It is generally understood to mean 'perseverance' or 'patience', where an individual employs self-control and discipline, and remains silent about personal problems. When Japanese emperor Hirohito (1901 – 1989) called for the Japanese people to accept unconditional surrender to the US and its allies in August 1945 he called for them to bear the unbearable (De Mente, 2004: 74). *Gaman* has been credited as a characteristic displayed by Japanese-Americans held in US internment camps during World War II and to those affected by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami; in particular the workers that chose to remain in the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant, despite the high risk of radiation poisoning were regarded as *gaman* (The Economist, 'Japan: Silenced by gaman', April 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, online: <http://www.economist.com/node/18587325> ).



Call that substanceless and durationless moment the pure *event*. The time of the event does not belong per se to the body in movement-vision or even to the body without an image. They incur it. It occurs to them. As time-form it belongs to the *virtual*, defined as that which is maximally abstract yet real, whose reality is that of potential – pure relationality, the interval of change, the in-itself of transformation. It is a time that does not pass, that only comes to pass. It cannot be suspended because, unlike empirical time, it does not flow. The event is superempirical: it is the crystallization, out the far side of quasi corporeality, of already actualized spatial perspectives and emplacements into a time-form from which the passing present is excluded and which, for that very reason, is as future as it is past, looping directly from one to the other. It is the immediate proximity of before and after. It is nonlinear, moving in two directions at once: out from the actual (as past) into the actual (as future). The actuality it leaves as past is the same actuality to which it no sooner comes as future: from being to becoming. (Massumi, 2002: 57-58)

Massumi's event time as described here can be usefully expanded upon by drawing on Deleuze's borrowing of Bergson's *le devenir*, the notion of time as an ever expanding whole that he called 'duration'<sup>89</sup>. I would like to examine a scene from *Dream Regime - Era of the Sick, Part Two* (Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011, (as seen in performance documentation DVD 4, *Dream Regime: Part Two – Era of the Sick*, Morishita Studio, Tokyo (2011)), in which I participated as a performer, in order to identify Bergson's notion of time in the performer body, located in the performance space, in relation to the notion that the body of transformation might *become* space itself. My reading of duration as experienced within the scene also acts as a metaphor for *le devenir*.

I have included the image below (Figure 42) to highlight the complexity of attempting to represent time when accounting for tempo-centred practice. The image represents a fragment of a fragment-in-time from the scene that I shall discuss here. The complex nature of the rehearsal process for *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick* included, although was not limited to, an international cast of 17 performers (some of whom had not worked together previously) working through translations of 5 languages; the absence of one performer due to a visa not being issued; a short rehearsal period; the production

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<sup>89</sup> In my reading of duration, I am primarily drawing upon Deleuze's *Bergsonism* (1966), which draws upon Bergson's concept of multiplicity and the attempt to unify heterogeneity and continuity. I notionally refer to Bergson's work on multiplicity, intuition, perception and memory and the implications of his ideas on the body in space and time, however my writing at this stage is informed primarily by Deleuze on Bergson.

having to be compressed to one hour duration due to performing as a double-bill (Kaitaisha performances are usually around 2 hours in duration); the director creating two separate pieces (part one and two) to be performed on alternate nights; the work as a culmination of an 8 year project (and thus dense in performance material); and rehearsals taking place in several different spaces. The logics of production were therefore complex and frantic.

One consequence of this was that Shimizu altered the composition of the final scene moments before the first performance, and as a result the scene was semi-improvised in terms of the time structure. The structure of the composition leading up to the final position (the performers seated upstage, with their backs to the audience) was changed, so rather than a few performers engaging in a specific sequence, all the performers simultaneously moved through individual choreographic sequences, which they had performed earlier in the piece. Although the performers were working individually, they were also working with a sense of, and responding to, the other performers in the space, therefore the improvisational nature of the scene lay in the tempo, the duration, and the use of space. The precise moment that the performers needed to arrive at their final seated position was not clear, and the scene thus became lengthy in duration as we decided together intuitively, through action - as our shared experience allowed, when that ending point would be. Multiple actions were happening at once; as each performer moved through their individual choreography they had their own singular duration, yet they also had a shared sense of duration, and maintained a connection, with the other performers.

As a performer I had a sense of both repetition (past), (as I had performed the sequence both earlier in the piece and in previous Kaitaisha performances), and the sense of something new being created (present/future), as I engaged with different bodies, a new use of the space, a different tempo, and for a new audience. The live moment of such an improvisation was exhilarating and liberating as I became absorbed in the moment, aware that although I knew the ending point, there were endless potentialities of action in between. My dance became unpredictable and unstable as my performer 'self' became absorbed in the durational flux that unfolded. In the live moment of the performance I sensed a 'shift' in time itself, as the duration was experienced as being

shared with both the performers and the audience; this sense of a shared duration was exaggerated by the fact that the composition was not set.

[This final scene and the full performance can be seen in performance documentation DVD 4, *Dream Regime: Part Two – Era of the Sick*, Morishita Studio, Tokyo (2011); the first performance can also be seen in performance documentation DVD 3, *Dream Regime: Part One – Faithful Bodies*, Morishita Studio, Tokyo (2011)]



Figure 42: A fragment of a fragment in time: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime: Era of the Sick Part Two* in performance: Morishita Studio, Tokyo, February 2011. Left to right, Aleksandra Kamińska, Elena Polzer (and her reflection), Aleksandra Sliwińska, Jonathan Giles Garner, Nakajima Miyuki, Katarzyna Pastuszek, and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

My experience of this moment in performance corresponds with *la durée*, as discussed by Hodges in his article ‘Rethinking time’s arrow: Bergson, Deleuze and the anthropology of time’, wherein he initially discusses Bergson and Deleuze’s *la durée* through defining the distinction between quantitative, or discrete, and qualitative, or

continuous, multiplicities: ‘Qualitative multiplicities ... on division create heterogeneous differences. Simplified for the purpose of this discussion, they comprise an interrelated (i.e. relational) infinite whole, where any multiple is fused with all other multiples, and any one cannot either be isolated or change without all others changing ...’ (Hodges in Friedman et al, 2008: 409). Hodges continues to define *la durée* in terms that are useful for considering the multiple ‘self’ within duration:

... *la durée* is abstractly and analogously defined as consisting of concrete, qualitative multiplicities, which divide continuously. These multiplicities in reality comprise the life and matter of the universe, which one can therefore describe as existing in a state of incessant, relational division, ‘flux’, or ‘individuation’. *La durée* is therefore a *non-chronological* conception in its essential nature, and its tendency to differentiate may be viewed as the origin of the phenomenon we subsequently call ‘time’. (Ibid: 410)

In the context of the Kaitaisha scene, I am interested in this described state of flux, where any multiple is fused with other multiples. In compositional terms the scene can be described as an active ‘mess’, whereby the space is constantly transformed and remodelled throughout the duration, creating a fractured temporal narrative. The past, present, and future are played out simultaneously in the composition, and through the duration of the performance itself. As Hodges continues to assert, as he thinks through *la durée*, ‘the possible can only exist in retrospect: while the new may be ‘possible’ before it exists in the sense that there is nothing to prevent it occurring ...’ (Ibid: 410), this framing of the possible can be defined in terms of the *virtual*. The complexity of *la durée* in terms of my analysis of the complex self, lies in Deleuze’s assertion (as he draws on Bergson), as defined by Hodges, that ‘the present must pass *at the same time* as it is present’ (Ibid: 411).

Hodges also highlights the importance of the integrated relationship between time and space in *la durée*, whereby its character is thoroughly spatio-temporal (Ibid: 412). As the performers repeat choreographies from the earlier sections of the work, the scene is composed of layers of past, present, and future; the weight of the ever-expanding virtual past constantly pushes time onward into the present, and the future is held in the minds of the performer and spectator as inevitable but not knowable until it is past. As I move through my choreographic sequence and respond through improvisation, I travel virtually through memories of previous choreographic sequences and previous performed connections with other Kaitaisha performers from one year ago, or one

moment ago. As Grosz states in ‘Bergson, Deleuze and Becoming’, the performers are *temporally mapped* relative to each other:

Bergson attributes to the universe as a whole a durational power that enables all objects, things, to be synchronized, that is temporally mapped relative to each other, divisible into different fluxes while nevertheless capable of participating in a single, englobing current forward. The real here is understood as durational: it is composed of millions even billions of specific durations, each with its own measure or span. Yet each duration can be linked to the others only because each partakes in the whole of duration and carries in it a durational flow, that is, an irresistible orientation forward and an impulse to complexity. It is because the real is constructed as fundamentally dynamic, complex, open-ended, because becoming, which is to say, difference, must be attributed to it in every element that it cannot begin to become, it does not acquire virtuality but it is always in flux. (Grosz, 2005: 11 – 12)

This notion of the self in flux, temporally mapped relative to the other through duration, is key to my understanding of the complex performer-self that is in the Kaitaisha sense, as I signalled above, *becoming* space.

### **The Actional Self and the Complex System**

As I have already laid out in detail, the physically complex actional self that I have located is underpinned by the notion that the self is always already in flux, temporally mapped relative to the ‘other’ through duration. I will now briefly attempt to extend this notion to the self by thinking through material presence and finding ways to describe the self diagrammatically, and through looking at the dynamic and relational self as operating in a collaborative framework. I briefly extend such a material presence to the psychological perspective of the ‘decentred’ self as embedded in the other. I will locate such a self within practice and the complex system, drawing specifically on my collaborative practice-as-research with dancer/performer Noyale Colin.

#### **i. Relational dynamics and the complex system**

In his introduction to *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (2001), Schatzki lays out approaches within practice theory, and discusses the role of practice as, in his view, the central phenomenon of human life (displacing mind as the central phenomenon). He describes a ‘practice approach’ in terms of ‘all analyses that (1) develop an account of practices, either the field of practices or some subdomain thereof (e.g., science), or (2)

treat the field of practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject matter' (Schatzki, 2001: 2). He asserts that a practice theorist is likely to conceive of practices as 'embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding' (Ibid: 2), with practice theorists typically believing that bodies and activities are 'constituted' within practices. In terms of embodiment, Schatzki goes on to say that 'Practice theory's embrace of embodied understanding is rooted in the realization that the body is the meeting points both of mind and activity and of individual activity and social manifold' (Ibid: 8). Hence, practices are informed by an embodied understanding of them. Schatzki continues, importantly, to discuss practice theory as '*materially mediated* nexuses of activity' (Ibid: 11), whereby nonhumans (e.g. material sites that are used in performance which both allow and shape performing and spectating) have a role in directing human practices. In terms of the performer-self and the agency of nonhuman components I can draw on the Kaitaisha scene that I described above (*Dream Regime Era of the Sick Part Two*, Tokyo, February 2011), where one can see complexity operating between performers, between performers and the audience, and also between the (nonhuman) lights, set, music, projections, props, and so on. Nonhuman agency is considered by Schatzki in terms of a humanist and posthumanist perspective, as he states that humanist theorists might acknowledge that:

... human agency both arises from bodily systems and is tied to 'external' arrangements of humans and nonhumans. According to them, however, these facts neither replace human agency with, nor fragment it into, the actions of these systems or arrangements. (Ibid)

"The bulk of practice theorists", he continues,

... might also accept other posthumanist-sounding theses, for instance, that human activity is not completely mastered by the self-conscious subject of modernist lore, and that nonhumans are agents in some sense of the word. (Ibid)

In my discussion of the performer self I locate the performer within the posthuman, whereby I consider the nonhuman as an agent *in some sense of the word*. In Knorr Cetina's 'Objectual practice' (Knorr Cetina, 2001) she questions how we can begin to theorize practice that allows for the *emotional* (my italics) basis of research work, she addresses subject-object differentiation, and asks 'How can we conceive of practice in a

way that accommodates this dissociation?’ (Ibid: 175). I position the performer self in Knorr Cetina’s terms, as *internally differentiated*, and relationally dynamic, rather than monolithic and wholly intentional. In practice theory’s prioritisation of practice over mind, Schatzki states that ‘knowledge and truth ... are mediated both by interactions between people and by arrangements in the world’ (Schatzki: 12), and, as a consequence of this, knowledge does not belong to individuals but rather to groups. This assertion seems to me to suggest the constitutive displacement of the agency of the individual subject as sole determinant, and, in terms of the performer self, brings me back to Knorr Cetina’s relational dynamics, that, in my view, link not only subjects and objects, but also subject to subject whole or in part (e.g. performer to performer, performer facial aspect or gestuality to spectator) and to a shared knowledge that continually unfolds in the performance space. Connected to this is the notion of potentially continuous transformation between subjects and objects.

Such a notion of relational dynamics can be expanded upon by locating the performer self, as it operates in a collaborative framework, within Cilliers’ model of the complex system. Writing from a post-structuralist perspective, Cilliers explores complexity in the light of philosophy and science. He draws an important distinction between a complicated and a complex system (Cilliers, 1998: viii-ix), whereby the complex system is a system whose full nature cannot be understood simply by analysing its components. Importantly, a feature of the complex system is its flux-like state, wherein relationships are not fixed, but shift and change, often as a consequence of self-organisation (Ibid), and where intricate relationships between the components in the complex system constitute the system itself. In attempting to find ways to describe the self diagrammatically as it operates as part of a collaborative framework, drawing on my experience as a performer within Kaitaisha, I propose to draw on the following elements of the complex system as Cilliers theorises it:

- (i) Complex systems consist of a large number of elements ...
- (ii) ... A large number of elements ... have to interact and this interaction must be dynamic. A complex system changes with time ...
- (iii) The interaction is fairly rich, i.e. any element in the system influences and is influenced by, quite a few others ...
- (iv) The interactions have a number of important characteristics ... the interactions are non-linear ... small causes can have large results, and vice-versa ...
- (v) The interactions have a fairly short range, i.e. information is received primarily from immediate neighbours ...

- (vi) There are loops in the interactions. The effect of any activity can feed back onto itself ... can be positive ... or negative ...
- (vii) ... usually open systems, they i.e. interact with their environment ... difficult to define a border of a complex system ...
- (viii) ... operate under conditions far from equilibrium. There has to be constant flow of energy to maintain the organisation and ensure its survival ...
- (ix) ... have a history. Not only do they evolve through time, but their past is co-responsible for their present behaviour. Any analysis of a complex system that ignores the dimension of time is incomplete, or at most a synchronic snapshot of a diachronic process.
- (x) Each element of the system is ignorant of the behaviour of the system as a whole, it responds only to information that is available to it locally ... If each element 'knew' what was happening to the system as a whole, all of the complexity would have to be present in *that element*.

(Ibid: 4 – 5)

In my view, each element of the complex system, as drawn out above, can be found in performer acts of selfhood, as I have observed over time; importantly, I am defining the performer self here as no longer an individual (i.e. “the performer”), but as one of many performer selves (or performer elements associated with self-hood) that form the complex Kaitaisha system as a whole. The complex system that is operating in Kaitaisha (and beyond Kaitaisha as well, to allow its recognition as such) not only operates on a social and organisational level, but also in terms of the performative. It is crucial to emphasise here that the complexity operating on the social and organisational level, in my view, feeds into, and mutually defines, the complexity that operates on the performative level.

I can find key elements of Cilliers’ complex system operating in Kaitaisha in various ways, for example, element (ii) relates to company members and guest performers interacting dynamically; element (iii) relates to teaching and learning processes, where, for example, the choreographer both teaches and learns from the performer; element (vii) relates to an interaction with the environment of space (theatrical space), the audience, and place (political, geographical, cultural); element (viii) relates to the often chaotic and unstable rehearsal environment. Element (iii) also relates on a performative level to the Kaitaisha signature practice called the *murekehai*, or the ‘pack’. In *murekehai* performers move in the space as a group, aiming to maintain a connection to the other performers and move as ‘one body’, whilst continuing to move through their own individual choreographies; these individual choreographies are wholly dependent on the impetus given by other members of the pack. Kaitaisha describe the process of



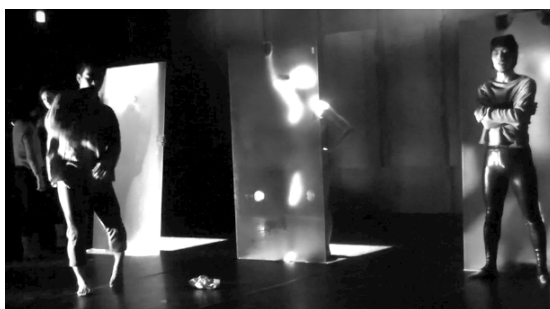
*murekehai* in terms of performers' extending their sensory awareness to the space and the other performers, until all move as one body, with all their senses connected. The experience of *murekehai* is a sensed and intimate engagement whereby the performers' actions are subject to the presence of others. This way of moving has been developed over a long period by Kaitaisha, and is often used to create a sensed connection, which then extends into choreographed physical contact with the wall, the floor, and between performers. The moments of contact are produced through a set of signature contact movements, which range from a contact movement where two performers entwine and twist into each other, to a lift where one performer catches another. If I were to visualise the experience of operating in *murekehai*, as a performer, diagrammatically, I might imagine thousands of invisible threads between myself, other performers, the audience<sup>90</sup> and the space, that mark my 'sensed' connection and physical response to them. It is this 'sensing' that dictates my performer-response in the moment of *murekehai*, and yet, this is a *learned* technique, developed within the organisational and social structure of Kaitaisha over many years, and layered into a choreographic framework and the composition of the performance itself. It can be seen here then, that the complex system of the company is operating in many ways and on many levels. In terms of my project, I have to ask whether it is possible to account for such complexity and, in terms of duration, how can one ever fully account for time? Indeed, Cilliers questions whether one can only ever provide a synchronic snapshot of a diachronic process (Ibid: 5). Cilliers goes on to argue for the notion of 'distributed representation', whereby in '... such a framework the elements of the system have no representational meaning by themselves, but only in terms of patterns of relationships with many other elements' (Ibid: 11), and it is within such a notion that I would locate the performer self that I have identified.

It may be useful to extend such models of material presence to the (psychoanalytic) Lacanian model of the 'decentred' self as one that is in significant part embedded in the other. I do not intend to develop this line of enquiry in detail, as it is beyond the scope of my project; however, it is relevant to briefly acknowledge the role of psychoanalysis

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<sup>90</sup> I would argue that a spectator does not have the equivalent degree of *murekehai* sensation as a performer who is intensely engaged with the creating, receiving, and being part of the pack, and yet, to a certain extent, a spectator is still able to both receive and create this sensation.

in our perception, and construction, of self. In *The Embedded Self* (2010) Mary-Joan Gerson frames her view of the self (in relation to couples and family therapy) in terms of intersubjectivity. She asserts that ‘... what is unformulated in conscious experience for many partners is the degree to which they are prompted, shaped, and influenced by their intimate other’ (Gerson, 2010: 3), and locates in her text the notion of the distributive, or de-centred self. One such example of this is the idea of ‘projective identification’, whereby someone is able to divest oneself of an intolerable quality by cloning it on an intimate partner. Gerson extends her line of thought to the idea that one can induce affective and subjective states in the other ‘through facial expressions alone’ (Ibid: 5). Gerson states that there is significant interpenetration between self and others, irrespective of whether the self chooses to acknowledge this or not, and that one’s experience of oneself is inextricably linked to one’s experience of systemic others. Gerson’s analysis of intersubjectivity, and her claim that Western culture reinforces a sense of psychological autonomy and impermeability, is useful to draw on in my performer-body analysis in terms of locating a self that can produce affective and subjective states in the other, while equally undergoing an equivalent degree of affective impact by that other. It is relevant to consider how a psychoanalytic approach such as this can be read in relation to the distributed self that I have discussed throughout this chapter, where I have located the self relationally and as always already in flux, as I draw out in Chapter Five.



**[The ‘complex system’ in rehearsal:  
please see at this point ‘Documentation  
of Practice, Disc One, *Dream Regime:  
Faithful Bodies and Era of the Sick* 2011:  
‘Rehearsal Processes’]**



Figures 43 – 48: The Kaitaisha ‘complex system’ in rehearsal: Gekidan Kaitaisha collaboration *Dream Regime*, Morishita Studio, Tokyo February 2011; Members of the cast/company staff, photos Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

## ii. The relational self in collaboration: PaR with Noyale Colin

I propose to examine such a shifting tension between a nomadic 'I' and a distributed self, through moving away from Kaitaisha and drawing on my collaborative studio-based practice with dance/performance maker and doctoral researcher Noyale Colin, which I detailed in the introduction<sup>91</sup>. I would suggest that the dynamic processes of our movement improvisations provide a collision of bodies/sense of self; that our practice can be considered in terms of Cilliers' complex system where emergent and shifting relationships develop through our interaction in improvisation; and that our decision-making processes are influenced by this complex process of emergent shifting relationships.



Figure 49: Aberystwyth residency 2012; Noyale Colin, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

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<sup>91</sup> The collaboration with Colin is extensively discussed in a co-authored article entitled 'Bodies in Motion: Working through Plurality', (De)Parsing Bodies, Skepsi: *The Interdisciplinary Online Journal of European Thought and Theory in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume V, Issue 1, Autumn 2012, Canterbury : School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent, Online Publication.

Our practice engaged with exploring the relationship between the ‘self’ and (our) bodies in motion, and the affective relationship between ourselves as performers. Our sessions and residencies involved a sharing of practice and, as artists from different training backgrounds but with shared performance-making approaches, an attempt within this to find places of difference and commonality. We undertook various exercises, for example: giving each other a list of tasks to perform together in an improvisation; responding to each other’s improvised movements in the space through extending our senses (and working extensively with the notion of ‘listening’); creating solo sequences based on the memory of the gestures of others; mirroring each other; and giving each other impulses to respond to. I propose to discuss several elements of our practice in some detail here, in order to illustrate our sense that a collision of ‘sense of self’ emerged through such practice.

A key question that we addressed was what is involved in becoming literally ‘beside oneself’ and experiencing ‘plurality’: this question was drawn from cultural theorist and mathematician Brian Rotman’s text *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts, and Distributed Human Being* (2008). Rotman argues that alphabetic text has become incompatible with the experiences of selves and subjectivities that have emerged in relation to new technologies and networked media, and suggests that with parallel computing the breaking down of barriers between self and other leads the networked self to become multiple, distributed, and quite literally besides itself:

But what is involved in becoming besides oneself? In experiencing plurality? How does one accede to the para-human? The process is not to be identified with imitating, reproducing, splitting oneself; or identifying with, or assimilating another; or being reborn as a new being ... It is rather a form of a temporal change, becoming party to a condition other than one’s own, a question of self-difference, of standing to the side of the single, monadic ‘I’... Can I, you, those yet to come, really not be what we have (felt to have) been for so long in Western culture, an ‘I’ that is before all else, as a condition for all else, an enclosed, individual, indivisible, opaque, private, singularly rooted Me? ... Can it be a network? (Rotman, 2008: 103 – 4)

Rotman’s question is born in large part of the experience of homogeneity produced by electronic codification/pixilation.



One way in which we engaged with such notions was through developing a performative score that might allow us to interact and to ‘map’ the network of the performing self. Such a score comprised the following elements<sup>92</sup>:

- *a (previous) movement phrase*
- *a (new) movement phrase of repeated gestures*
- *a (self written) butoh fu*
- *a series of images: Francis Bacon 'The Base of Crucifixion' (1944), 'The Human Head' (1953), 'Man with Dog' (1953); Paula Rego 'Scavengers' (1994), 'Baying' (1994); Gericault 'Study for Raft of the Medusa' (1818)*
- *an object: Marbles/balls/metronome*
- *a text: Dante 'The Inferno'; Kafka 'Metamorphosis'; Merleau Ponty 'Phenomenology of Perception'; 'Everybodys Performance Scores'; Deborah Hay 'My Body the Buddhist'; a selection of Mary Oliver's poetry.*
- *a costume: Wig/Shirt/Slips*
- *a recount (through any medium) of a walk taken in Aberystwyth (recounting images/sensations)*
- *a shared experience of allowing improvised movement on a wind-swept jetty*



**[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc Two, Practice as Research with Noyale Colin: ‘Developing a Performative Score’’]**

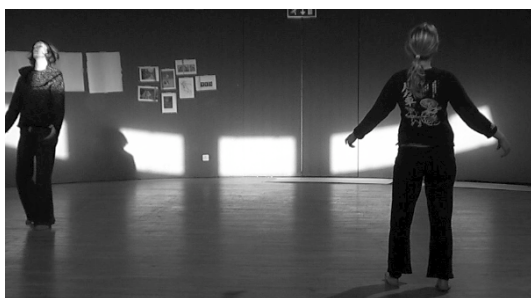
We used elements of the score ideas above to compose individual scored sequences. We practised a range of approaches, whereby we performed our scores as a solo whilst the other observed; as a duet; and as part-solo/part-duet, with the other intervening when they chose to. Importantly, we attempted to become increasingly immersed in the other as we performed our own score. I would suggest that through our practice, we developed a performative sense of ‘recognition’ of the other. For example, during the

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<sup>92</sup> This score is taken from my working notebook.

above exercise, I began to move through a familiar solo choreographic sequence that I have developed over several years, and have performed many times. Colin gradually began to mirror my movements; I did not focus on her, but I could see her fleetingly in my peripheral vision, and was aware of her presence. We recorded our practice, and later, as I watched the film of this exercise I saw that I was unintentionally out of shot and only Colin's movements were visible; her movements were clearly her own, and yet I could recognise my actional self in her. It is my sense that Colin is not merely mirroring the signature of my movements; it is rather that she recognises 'me' or my sense of 'me-ness', and what that 'me' might be, and she can pre-empt my rhythm, movements, and use of the space. Equally, I could recognise Colin; for example, in another exercise, I responded to Colin's improvised movements through responding to them with a gradually increasing awareness/intensity, starting with working with the notion of having a five per cent awareness of her, and increasing and extending my awareness and physical response over time until we moved together in the space, each responding in equal degree to the other.

The recognition that I had of Colin in this exercise is in part based on my understanding of the rhythm of her bodywork in time and space. It is my view that this detailed engagement, and recognition comes from our personal and a collaborative relationship and its continually unfolding dialogue; these are all at play as we move together in the space, and our complex set of relationships endlessly interweave and separate to produce a complex collision of self-awarenesses. Perhaps this sense of recognition has something to do with the notion of kinaesthetic empathy that I signalled above, where we are able to respond as intuitive expert-practitioners to the other's movement as it is mapped on our motor-system. To discuss this in detail is beyond the scope of this project, yet I would argue that something beyond, or in addition to, kinaesthetic empathy is at play, where whilst in the studio with Colin, I constantly change, adapt, and adopt my approach, and physicality, to find a common fit with this other dancer body.



[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc Two, Practice as Research with Noyale Colin: ‘Duet Improvisation’ and ‘From the Jetty Improvisation’]



Figure 50: PAF residency, France 2011; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Noyale Colin.



This process of adaptation and adoption creates a sense of flux, which is akin to my experience with Kaitaisha. I would argue that although I experience a shifting of aspects of my 'selfhood' – particularly at the start of Kaitaisha collaborations – I also experience recognition, as I am physically reminded of choreographies, gestures, and actions that I had forgotten; and arguably onlookers see evidence of my training as well as my otherness; hence, this 'knowledge' exists in a network or complex system. As I engage with Kaitaisha or Colin, I experience both a constant sense of flux, where my 'self-hood' is endlessly shifting, but also a recognition, where I can only see myself through another, and through this it is less a sense of 'I' and the 'other', that I experience, and more a sense of 'us', and of a network – which might also be called a sense of expert belonging and/or 'indwelling'. I would additionally argue that this network is not only composed of the performer bodies, but what these bodies or this bodywork serves to mediate: a composition of relations, or, in Cilliers' terms as patterns of relationships, between the performers and the other elements in the space. Arguably it is this sort of fluctuating play of identifiers that onlookers experience as belonging to an ensemble of workers, rather than a group of disparate beings, and equally it is this sense of ensemble that provides them, in the case of Kaitaisha, with a pointer to a particular directorial signature.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The (Dis)location and Transformation of Self (or selves) in Collaboration

In this chapter I draw specifically on my experience of collaborating with Kaitaisha on their performance *Jouissance System* (February 2012, Tokyo). I move between this, the experience of the everyday, and the Site/Memory Mapping Project ‘Tokyo Marathon Walk’<sup>93</sup>, viewing them as events that form parts of the complex whole with regards to the ways I experienced the Kaitaisha collaboration, and that thus establish my understanding of the notion of self or selfhood in collaboration in a wider sense. I include a selection of excerpts from the diary that I wrote on a daily basis whilst in Tokyo, in an attempt to illustrate the complexity and ambivalence I experienced both within and outside the rehearsal studio and, in Ulmer’s terms (1994) (as outlined in Chapter One, page 83), to illustrate my complex mode of active observation and open reception to every kind of experience. I frame myself operating as a tourist-theoretician, with respect to Ulmer’s *theoria*, and I propose that within this framework, I might be perceived to be operating, with Kaitaisha, in Bhabha’s ‘third space’, or in the in-between, as the notion was raised in Chapter One (page 82 - 3). I draw on the concept of self that I described in ethnographic terms<sup>94</sup> in Chapter Three, and the notion of the physically-complex actional ‘self’, as discussed in Chapter Four.

I locate such notions of self, as it is experienced, within the performance-making process for *Jouissance System*, and I attempt to account for how this sense, that experience is layered and complex, might offer the performer a corresponding sense that infinite potentialities and transformations are possible. I attempt to account for these collaborations, and for the apprehension of the possible transformation of the experience of self, in terms of three distinct temporal and spatial locations: the preparation, the moment, and the retrospective. What I will conclude, in this section, is that I have been quietly and progressively transformed through my ongoing engagement

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<sup>93</sup>The ‘Tokyo Marathon Walk’ was an event that took place on Sunday 19th February 2012, as part of an ongoing collaboration – the Site/Memory Mapping Project – between British-Korean artist Mikyoung Jun Pearce and myself. Both the ‘Tokyo Marathon Walk’ and the Gekidan Kaitaisha ‘*Jouissance*’ collaboration (2012) are discussed in a collaborative article - ‘The (dis)location of time and space: Trans-cultural collaborations in Tokyo’, co-authored by Jun Pearce and myself (Jun Pearce, M. and Woodford-Smith, R., 2012).

<sup>94</sup>As operating as both insider and outsider within Kaitaisha’s practices.

in such processes, but that my awareness that I have been transformed is something I only possess in retrospect. I attempt below to draw this retrospective sense of transformation out in some detail, arguing in terms of PaR that it is process that needs to be grasped here, rather than its simple outcome.

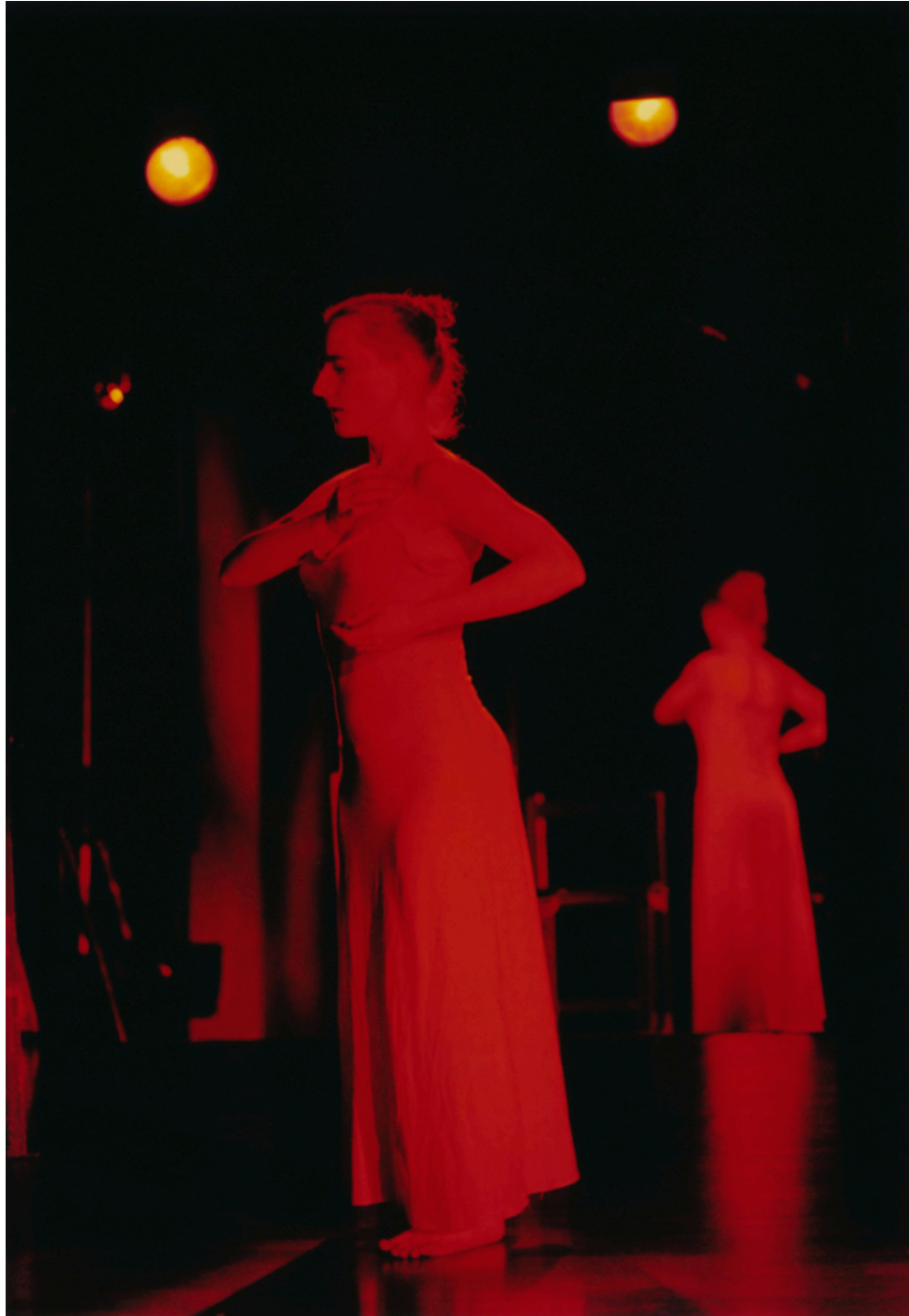


Figure 51: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012; Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

## Preparation

At this point I propose to review the transformational process that a Noh performer undertakes as a metaphor for the processes that I undergo as I prepare for my collaborations in Japan. In terms of research processes themselves, I would argue that accounts of the Noh performer's process provide a close affinity with the undertakings that I attempt to account for in this chapter. Clearly this shift in cultural focus from a Western performer training, to an Eastern tradition seems apposite in the present context, whereas I have suggested that this has not necessarily been the case for some of the published writers cited in previous chapters. I am arguing here, in raising the comparison with Noh theatre, that the cultural traditions that inform the sense of identity and possibility of the performer group with whom I am working, are otherwise 'other' to my own cultural inheritance.

Noh theatre is performed in a space composed of three elements: near (the stage), far (the mirror room) and in-between (the bridge). The mirror room - *kagami no ma* – is a space where the musicians (*hayashi*) play warm-up music, and where the main Noh performer (*shite*), fully dressed and preparing to go on stage, gazes into the mirror to concentrate on his role, and then puts on his mask and waits to enter the stage, via the bridge. The mirror room is a site of transformation, and the performance time starts pre-performance and off stage, once the *shite* and *hayashi* enter this space. An important concept in Noh is *jo-ha-kyū*; *jo* means beginning, and refers to positioning; *ha* means break or ruin, and suggests the destruction of an existing state; and *kyū* means fast, and refers to speed. The concept unifies space and time, binding them with a breaking element, and governs the flow of time and the changes of space occurring in Noh. The performance space is also governed by *jo-ha-kyū*; the far end of the bridge is *jo*, the middle section is *ha*, and the section that abuts the stage is *kyū*; the stage itself is also divided into the three sections (Konparu, 2005). I would suggest that pre-Tokyo collaborations, I inhabit a space similar to the mirror room, as I prepare for, and undertake, my journey to Japan; as I travel to Japan I cross a 'bridge', and undergo a transition during the journey, from the beginning point (*jo*), to the '*ha*', where my existing state is shattered, to *kyū*, where both time and space shift pace, as I inhabit a space (Tokyo, and the Kaitaisha rehearsal space) that operates at a different tempo to that of my everyday pace.

The preparation stage begins in the UK, months in advance, as Kaitaisha proposes the project, and we discuss, and apply for funding<sup>95</sup>; if this is successful, logistical details such as accommodation and flights are arranged, and I exchange a series of emails with Hino and Shimizu on the themes and concepts that they wish to explore through the performance. I will physically prepare for the work through increasing my training regime; and I might create a work-in-progress choreographic score, text, or outline of ideas to present to Kaitaisha, based on the themes that they have proposed. I will pack my suitcase, remembering to include training clothes that I know work well for Kaitaisha's rehearsals (layers, for the long waiting periods and a cold studio); specific items that I might need for the performance, such as my metronome, a photograph, or a particular costume; and small gifts for Kaitaisha and friends in Tokyo (gift-giving is important, and I like to ensure that I have something to exchange). It is a solitary pursuit, and the journey is a long one in which I adjust to leaving my partner behind for an extensive period, and prepare myself for what is to come. I will read over my notes, and perhaps learn lines, or read critical texts that Shimizu has recommended<sup>96</sup>.

I begin my transition whilst travelling on the train for 6 hours from Aberystwyth to London; the landscape dramatically shifts around me from the Welsh landscape of estuaries, hills, and trees to the view from the plane of white clouds, below which might be Scandinavia or Russia. I arrive, jetlagged, glassy-eyed, and stiff, into Narita airport, 9 hours behind local time. I am fingerprinted, photographed, and questioned at airport security, and finally travel on a crowded train across Tokyo, straining to keep my eyes open and adjust to new – yet familiar – sights, smells and sounds; my senses are

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<sup>95</sup> Kaitaisha rely on funding from organisations such as the Japan Foundation, Saison Foundation, and other bodies, as there is little government funding available for underground small theatre companies, particularly those that use physical theatre, or dance as a mode of expression, as opposed to text-based companies. The large-scale projects (which take place in hired theatre spaces outside of Kaitaisha's studio-performance space) rely on Kaitaisha obtaining funding, and often also require me to apply for funding as an individual to support my travel and accommodation costs (although these costs, in addition to my fee, are often covered by Kaitaisha). I have been previously funded by the Japan Foundation, Wales Arts International, the Lisa Ullmann Dance Travelling Scholarship Fund, and Middlesex University to travel to Japan for Kaitaisha collaborations.

<sup>96</sup> For the Dream Regime project (Tokyo, January – February 2011) it was recommended that I read Brecht's *The Decision* (*Die Maßnahme*) and Plato's *The Menexenus*. These texts were discussed during the TAGATAS symposium on 'Theatre and Nation' that was part of the Dream Regime project, and the discussions around these texts influenced the devising process for the production. For the *Jouissance System* project (Tokyo, January – February 2012) it was recommended that I read Joan Copjec's *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation*.

overwhelmed. Later still, I find myself in a strangely recognizable, yet alien, miniature ‘Weekly Mansion’ room, in a district of Tokyo, with the sensation that my body has not yet caught up with itself and is perhaps still hovering somewhere over Siberia. I have laid aside my identity, and put on my ‘mask’, as I inhabit an interval in the everyday, where I operate in the city and with Kaitaisha, both alone, and as one of the mass.



Figures 52 – 54: Travelling to Tokyo, January 2012, photos Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

## The Moment

### *Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January*<sup>97</sup>

*Woke early, very hungry, confused as to where I was after yesterday’s arrival in Tokyo and the late night following the welcome party Kaitaisha hosted for us*<sup>98</sup>. *Went out straight away to find some food, bought breakfast from a takeaway bento place, and took it to the apartment to eat - pumpkin, greens, and konbu onigiri. Slowly got ready and headed to Harajuku by metro.*

*On arrival, it was extremely busy, and as you looked down the street, you could see a sea of heads walking up the hill. We headed up towards the ‘Oriental Bazaar’ so Mikyoung could buy a yukata; once there I was enticed by all the pretty Japanese objects (that were clearly aimed at tourists), but resisted the temptation to buy anything.*

<sup>97</sup> Throughout this chapter I include entries from a journal that I wrote during the research and rehearsal period in Tokyo (January – February 2012) in an attempt to illustrate the complexity and ambivalence I experienced both within and outside the rehearsal studio and to illustrate my complex mode of active observation and open reception to every kind of experience.

<sup>98</sup> During the 2012 collaboration I lived with and spent much of my time with Mikyoung Jun Pearce, who was also collaborating with Kaitaisha. In this diaristic text I use the terms ‘us’ and ‘we’, and on the whole this refers to Jun Pearce and myself.

*Looked around for a cash-point, and tried a few, but my card was not accepted – felt stressed and a little worried. Walked back down towards Harajuku station, looking for somewhere to eat. Still very busy, people photographing girls posing – girly-style – for the camera; groups of people taking pictures of random things; and groups waiting outside buildings with cameras (as if a celebrity might emerge). The overall feeling was of strangeness, and frustration that we had absolutely no idea about what was going on. Tokyo felt alien. Finally found something to eat, a large bowl of noodles, soup and vegetables. Went into a huge 100-yen store for supplies, and found myself in a bit of a buying frenzy.*



Figures 55 – 57: Tokyo, January – February 2012. Left to right, ‘A Beacon of Rebirth Poster Project’; Setsubun Festival, Asakusa Sensō-ji; Offices at night, photos Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

*We were late to meet Jon, and found him shivering outside the station. Very cold day, freezing wind blew through me. Walked into Yoyogi Park, past the rockabilly dancers; men and a woman in leathers, side burns, and bouffant hair, dancing to Japanese-style 50’s rock music from their portable stereos and drinking beer. I recognised the same man dancing that we saw one Sunday in 2005. Jon took pictures of us in the park, stood under the trees, with his old slide camera. We walked through the park; there were people running, groups of young people dancing, crows cawing, and the tannoy announcing that dogs should be kept on leads. Under the bridge kids hung out – boys break-dancing, one wearing a dog costume. We walked towards Shibuya. It was very busy and dark now, as we weaved through people, and past flashing lights, shops, and big advertising boards. Jon said that in the weeks after the 03/11 disaster the streets were much quieter, with not many people about, and the electricity was limited so there*



*was less advertising, lights and audio advertising (which today creates a cacophony of sound as announcements with J-pop style music comes from each shop, combined with the sounds of pachinko parlours). I'm exhausted and feeling very alienated from the environment I am in.*

In the first days, although there is a familiarity from my previous visits to Tokyo<sup>99</sup>, I grapple with culture shock and physical adjustment to the time of the city. This is not merely jetlag, as my body lingers 9 hours behind local time; it is also an adjustment to the tempo and pace of the city, which I would suggest possesses a fractured hybrid timeframe. I spent many of my first few days walking the streets, researching, and familiarizing myself with the site, in preparation for the Site/Memory Mapping Project. In contrast to the frantic pace of Tokyo during the day, I engaged with the slowed-down pace of Kaitaisha rehearsals during the evenings. Kaitaisha tend to rehearse in the late afternoon/evenings, as company members have day-jobs<sup>100</sup>, frequently continuing well beyond midnight, and the timeframe in which the company have to create the production is often tight. Yet, despite the limited timeframe, and physical exhaustion of the late-night rehearsals, there does not appear to be a sense of urgency until the last few days before the performance. An entire rehearsal might be spent working on a small section of one scene, which may only involve several company members, leaving other performers to watch, or quietly stretch and rehearse their own scenes in a corner of the dark studio. In addition, Kaitaisha work with the slowed-down body<sup>101</sup>, and thus, in the rehearsals, we inhabit a physically and structurally slowed-down tempo.

Within the rehearsals in February (2012), the concept of time became significant in more than a technical sense. In discussion with Shimizu, he described his sense that following the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear disaster, time had stopped. He said that post-March 2011, Japanese people no longer knew how to feel

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<sup>99</sup>I have visited Tokyo to collaborate with Kaitaisha for periods of one to three months on five separate occasions (2005 – 2012).

<sup>100</sup>In the production week, the rehearsals will begin in the afternoons, and if it is a larger scale production (outside of the company's studio space in a hired theatre) the rehearsal period and hours will increase. When working outside of Japan the company tend to work during the day; however, as rehearsals have sometimes progressed into the late evening, guest performers have struggled with the late rehearsal hours, and there have been various tensions in relation to this. When Kaitaisha are not working on a production, they will meet on a weekly basis and in these sessions they will focus on warming-up (individually and as a group), and on company technique and duet or group sequences.

<sup>101</sup>As I have discussed in previous chapters.



or act; instead, they existed in a static, but flux-like, state. I would suggest that this sense of time frames how I experienced Tokyo, as I was almost constantly pulled back to what happened through experiencing peoples' stories, irradiated food warnings, and several aftershocks. Shimizu's intention in the performance was to address the questions of what stops time, or how to stop time through looking at the notion of *jouissance*<sup>102</sup>. As I discussed in Chapter Four, during a Kaitaisha performance, 'Tokyo Ghetto' (Croatia, 1996) (as I have seen in video documentation), a male performer (Kumamoto) hit a female performer repeatedly on the back; gradually audience members began to shout, and finally a man from the audience intervened by pulling Kumamoto away from the woman. Shimizu described this intervention as a '*jouissance* moment' where, for him, time both stopped and opened up, and moved beyond linear time to create a potential for change, recalling Bergson's notion of *le devenir*, as discussed in Chapter Four on page 172.

I interpret Shimizu's understanding of this intense moment in terms of Massumi's description of a 'temporal sink', wherein 'Intensity would seem to be associated with nonlinear processes: resonation and feedback, which momentarily suspend the linear progress of the narrative present from past to future... It's like a temporal sink, a hole in time as we conceive of it and narrativize it' (Massumi, 2002: 26). Shimizu described the concept of both linear and circular time as posing a restriction, and in this sense a '*jouissance* moment', which interrupts time, is liberating as it creates alternative potential actions and, as Shimizu argues, releases people from subordinating themselves to the linearity of historical experience. In this respect, I understood Shimizu's interpretation of *jouissance* as relating to a 'genuine' experience, which he argues does not currently exist. In this first discussion, Shimizu also talked about time in terms of Hijikata's notion of the 'unborn' body, where, as Hino explained, Hijikata suggested that 'no body' has yet been born. Shimizu and Hino understand this concept, in relation to *jouissance*, as things that we have not yet experienced, or pleasure that has not, or cannot, be experienced, due to the limitations of *jouissance*. This notion of the 'unborn'

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<sup>102</sup>The title of the performance, '*Jouissance* System', was a concept through which Shimizu intended to create the work. Shimizu draws here on Lacan's notion of *jouissance*, and the paradox of *jouissance*; the term remains untranslated in the English versions of his texts, but it denotes 'pleasure' or 'enjoyment', often sexual in nature, in French.

body was explored in rehearsals and the performance itself through a set of choreographed movements that Hino devised, as I set out below.



Figure 58: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012. Left to right, Yabe Kumiko, Aoki Yuhei, Aota Reiko and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

Following this explanation of Shimizu and Hino's understanding of time, Jun Pearce and myself (as the guest performers for this collaboration) were asked to consider how we might understand *jouissance* in terms of our own artistic practices and in terms of recent events or observations in our lives. For example, I mentioned to Hino that since I had seen her last year I had acquired an allotment and spent much time gardening, and consequently I wanted to spend less time online in a virtual space, as opposed to the more 'direct' space of the allotment, and we discussed the notion of the digital as contrasted with a materially-lodged and active self. Shimizu and Hino asked if I might write a text to develop for the performance that relates to such an experience of time and space, where the self is divided and in flux as it operates within the virtual environment or the material landscape, of what Hayles (Hayles [no date]) has called the

‘resistant materialities’ of a posthuman context. Shimizu and Hino tend to note such personal observations, and moments of interaction between performers in rehearsal and they attempt to include them in the performance dramaturgy or composition, as I illustrate in what follows. Through these first discussions, and through my engagement with the city during the day, I was beginning to adjust to the ‘time’ of Kaitaisha and Tokyo, whilst operating within Ulmer’s *theoria* (Ulmer, 1994), constantly open to every kind of emotional, cognitive, symbolic, imaginative, and sensory experience (Ibid: 121).



Figures 59 – 61: Tokyo, January – February 2012. Left to right, Signs in Otsuka Park; *Ema* Prayer cards in Otsuka Shrine; Delivery Van, photos Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

### ***Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January***

*Train to Ueno, walk around Ameyokocho market, and tempura cafe for lunch. Walk towards Inaricho. Went to ‘plastic food street’ (famous for selling cooking utensils and the plastic food that is on display here in every restaurant window as a description of the dishes on the menu – the models are amazingly life-like) and looked at the many specialist shops. Drawn in as a consumer. Snow tumbles off temple roof. Go to cafe and discuss project and work on text/ideas for Kaitaisha collaboration [...]*

*No rehearsal this evening as Shimizu prepares for the project. Kumamoto comes to our apartment and we cook for him. We drink, eat, and talk about his performance last night in Yubiwa Hotels ‘Doe’, the rehearsal process and Kaitaisha. Later, online, Arai<sup>103</sup> tells us not to eat mushrooms, beef, fish, milk, and only cheap soya beans (that have been imported) as they are all contaminated in his view. I have already eaten*

<sup>103</sup>Arai Tomoyuki is a Japanese friend who I met when he acted as translator for previous Kaitaisha collaborations.

*mushrooms. Kumamoto is eating all of these things. What advice to follow? I worry that I can't avoid eating foods sourced from the areas affected by the nuclear fall-out as I cannot read Japanese well enough to identify where vegetables I buy in the supermarket are from.*

### ***Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February***

*Walk around local area – tram, shrine, sento, supermarkets, barren park, homeless<sup>104</sup>. Lunch in noodle cafe (select dish from vending machine). Tully's cafe for afternoon of work. Watching the world go by from the cafe window. There is an older man stood outside the window for the few hours we are here; he seems to be checking the buses as they pull into the bus stop. He looks cold and bored (is he?). Why do there seem to be so many jobs here (like standing in the street and directing people around road works) that seem unnecessary (to me). Signs: I constantly rely on the image, rather than text here, to try to interpret what is happening. How does this different way of negotiating the world change me and how I perceive the world? Cuteness/kawaii: why is everything so cute here? Big pictures of pandas on construction sites. It seems (to me) to be infantilising people - when/why did this start? Mikiyoung told me about the Canadian freelance journalist who was deported from Japan, for a supposedly out of date visa (which he adamantly disputed), after writing critically about Fukushima. This worried me. What does it mean to be working with a theatre company – Kaitaisha – who openly*

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<sup>104</sup>As I have witnessed over the years in Tokyo, there are a large number of homeless people; many of them live in temporary tent-like constructions in Tokyo's parks, and they often walk the streets collecting cans or bottles to sell for cash. What is striking to me is that the majority of the people who live in the parks are older men. I have been told that, following the burst of the economic bubble and because of the current economic downturn, unemployment is high, and that many workers (particularly construction workers) lost homes that had been provided by their employers. During my time in Tokyo in 2012, I heard that there is a new phenomenon of young homeless sleeping in internet cafes. What stands out to me, as an outsider, is the sight of a pair of shoes placed neatly outside a cardboard box or tent-like home, and that, despite the vast number of homeless, I have never seen anyone begging for money. I underline the issue of homelessness here as it plays an important part in my daily experience of Tokyo, and because the issue is one that I often discuss with Kaitaisha as part of their critical discourse on Japanese society. In discussion with Shimizu, I asked why so many homeless people appear to be unsupported by the government, and he said that – in his view – it suited the government's agenda to have many visible homeless people in Tokyo, so citizens are reminded of what they might become if they do not adhere to the 'system'. Shimizu describes the homeless in Giorgio Agamben's terms (1998) as the *zoē* body, which is excluded from the *polis* (as I have discussed in Chapter Three, page 137) and this *zoē* or outsider body is one that Kaitaisha have often worked with, as a concept of physicality, as part of their signature practice.

*criticise the Japanese government, and who have also been openly critical about Fukushima? Could I be refused entry in future?*

### ***Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February***

*Long walk from apartment in Otsuka to Kaitaisha studio in Ochanomizu. Enroute – 100-yen store (need warmer socks, so cold in studio), freezing cold wind, sunny streets, bicycles, construction of huge building – men balanced high up on metal frame, dog grooming shop, park that looks barren, curry for lunch, several shrines – wooden prayer cards (Ema) blowing in breeze and paper tied to wooden frame, tanuki statues hidden in windows and outside doorways, cartoon signs and characters, up steep hill, shadows, fruit trees (oranges?), statues, get cash. Walk has taken two hours.*



Figures 62 – 64: Tokyo, January – February 2012. Left to right, Harajuku/kawaii dressed girls, Yoyogi Park; Tanuki Statue and plastic noodles in restaurant window; Reflections from the 45<sup>th</sup> floor, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, photos Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

### ***Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February***

*Yoyogi park. Walk around - man with bicycle music system performs, crows, homeless, drummers, group of teenagers practicing a play text – speaking in unison, girl frozen as statue – everyone photographs her, group of girls in cutesy outfits walking around as people photograph them, joggers, bird photographers with the largest lenses I have seen, dog walkers/dogs in buggies/dog on a skateboard/dogs in clothes. Interesting atmosphere - calm, relaxed, playful, little groups of types of people (The Joggers/The Kawaii girls/The Otaku etc.) doing their thing. Meet Jon for a drink. Jon's loneliness in the city, missing speaking English.*

## **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February**

*Rained all day. Mikiyoung and I traced maps of our hometowns of Anyang/Aberystwyth and took each other on walks in the Otsuka area: the routes we walk from home to our places of work. Narrated and recorded our memory-routes as we walked. Interesting sense of place - getting lost, no sense of where we are, happy not to have a goal and to get lost. We noticed little of the real landscape around us, focussing on our memory instead. Ended up in Sugamo area (got a little lost) and looked at the market.*

*Train to Shinjuku and walked to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building for Tourist office (to get maps), and up to the 45th floor for viewing. Felt very alienated by the environment – busy, confusing station, harsh architecture, grey tiles, long corridors, very cold, hard to know where to go - bad signage. Found tourist office unfriendly. Felt just like a consumer on a conveyor belt in the tower; Buy my expensive food! Buy my tacky toys! A strange/uncomfortable feeling in the Government building - what was in the site before? Lots of staff around, but they hardly communicated, stood like blank statues in uniforms. Walked back through Shinjuku station, it was rush hour and I was overwhelmed by people. Sound-recorded what I experienced:*

*Shinjuku station. Walking down a cold underpass. Grey, white tiles. Lots of people heading towards the station in a rush. Swept along with the crowd. Walking. Next to me a walking escalator. It's cold. I'm fearful about what's going to happen when I get into the station, if I am going to get crushed on the train in the rush hour. People in suits, boots, coats, bags, umbrellas. Running. Fur trimmed coat. Masks on people's faces. Two guys to my left, black jackets, collars turned up. Handbags. A man stood in the doorway on the telephone talking. ATM machine. AIWA building. Security guard. Mask. Shinjuku station West entrance bus terminal this way. Traffic cones. Pink bags. Older lady, big woolly hat. Man with a down cast mouth. Laughing. More masks on faces, blank faces, eyes peering out. Woman talking, fur trimmed coat, is it real? People walking behind me. Coming outside now. Bus station to my left. Car headlights. Walking, walking. A picture of an island. Cold air shoots from the left. Illuminated buildings, flashing lights. A man stood with a red cross on his back holding a sign advertising something. Two girls, arms linked, smiling. Walking towards a column, don't know exactly where I'm going. A man pushing a trolley. Lots of people heading in different directions. Two security staff in uniform. Guys looking like they are coming out of school. Someone's talking on the telephone. There's a man stood still with a hat, has a begging bowl. Oh! Someone has pushed past me and knocked my bag. Is he a monk? Just stood there. Oh! Dodging someone. Don't want to get lost. Coin lockers with pictures of puppies on. Red scarf, pink scarf, pink scarf, pink shirt, face mask, face mask. Man in a blue hat. Red coat, white coat, yellow neck scarf, glasses, fringe, red bag. Looking at signs, stopping, walking, following. Don't know where to go. JR Odayku line, Keio line, subway ... Keep walking, moving. Advertising sign. Lots of people moving towards me. Suspended in the air are*



*some people in a cafe, sat in chairs, man scratching his head and reading a book, listening to something on his iphone ... Oh! Oh! Man nearly walked into me. Guy on his telephone. Group of people ... looking lost. Girl with a tiger hat on. Feel like I'm being pushed from behind. Going through, beeping my ticket. 5 past 6, rush hour. There's a sea of people and signs ahead of me. Different numbers, 14, 13, 14, Shinjuku. This way, 16.* (Transcript of voice-recording, Tokyo, February 2012).

In the midst of the intensity of Tokyo, the evening rehearsals offer a familiar structure in which I can immerse myself. The first person to arrive at the studio usually sweeps the floor, and rehearsals begin with company members warming-up; each individual quietly follows their own routine and sometimes they join one another in warm-up sequences, or help stretch each other's muscles. Gradually, performers might begin to run through individual or duet sequences, from previous or new work, or practise core company techniques, such as 'carrying'<sup>105</sup>. Once Shimizu and Hino arrive, we begin to run through particular scenes. The process of a new production begins, as I have described, with a group discussion where Shimizu explains the themes, and company members contribute to an open discussion in relation to this. Such discussions are influenced by the amount of time that Kaitaisha have to work on a particular production, so in some cases, the discussion might be drawn out, and in other cases, it might be brief. As I have discussed<sup>106</sup>, around a week after the initial discussions, company members will present a performance 'etude' that relates to the themes<sup>107</sup>. Following the presentation of the etudes, Shimizu tends to have several days to consider the presentations, and following this, he usually has a clear outline for the performance, which he explains to the company. In this sense, there is space for individual company members to 'invent' in terms of their performance, yet Shimizu has a clear directorial role in terms of deciding the composition of the performance, and Hino and Shimizu both have a role in terms of sculpting and choreographing the individual parts. It seems to me that the period after the initial discussions and presentation of the *etudes*, is when the hard work of creating the performance begins. The rehearsal process in February

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<sup>105</sup>'Carrying' is a Kaitaisha signature technique that I outlined in detail in Chapter Four (page 163).

<sup>106</sup>As discussed in Chapter Three 'On a Lesson in Writing (from Barthes)'

<sup>107</sup>Not all company members will choose to present an etude, this is an individual choice, however, it appears to me to relate to the hierarchical structure in Kaitaisha, where more 'senior' members – who are older and have spent longer with the company – will present, and newer/younger members will not do so.

(2012) was particularly intense as, following funding cuts, Kaitaisha had reluctantly decided to move from their studio and performance space of many years in Ochanomizu. To mark the closing of 'Canvas' Kaitaisha presented a trilogy of performances, film screenings, and photo exhibitions, and Shimizu delivered a series of lectures; one of these lectures took place during the rehearsal period for '*Jouissance System*' and thus, rehearsal time was limited.



Figure 65: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012; Aota Reiko, photo Miyauchi Katsu.



### ***Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February***

*Film screening of 'Bye-Bye: The New Primitive' (2001). Very intense performance, I was totally absorbed. Started with Kumamoto's 'Of Power' sequence, then Nakajima and Hino – Nakajima walks whilst shaking, in grass skirt, sweat dripping off her; Hino in skullcap and leotard – nervous system dance. Adam<sup>108</sup> and others performed murekehai in front of film footage of carpet-bombing in Afghanistan. Adam slaps woman on back, another woman stands on chair with gold body paint, back to audience, she is naked. Ishi and another young man perform the 'Crystal discipline' technique, and the other young man then slaps his own knees in a repeated rhythm. Aota rolls across floor in handcuffs and hits the walls with handcuffs repeatedly, until a woman holds her. Murekehai (pack) is performed with synchronised pairs (not seen this before – liked it). It occurred to me that the performance was full of acts of endurance from each performer – pushed to their own limits. Kaitaisha's work has changed so much since this piece, but it is a gradual and subtle change. It is highly physical work and I cannot imagine some members of Kaitaisha being able to do this now, as they are getting older.*

*Shimizu's lecture – I feel frustrated to not understand Japanese well. He shows a clip of a Kaitaisha performance ('Tokyo Ghetto') in Croatia (1996), where Kumamoto hits woman's back – audience start to whistle and shout, until a man from the audience pulls Kumamoto back; once he has recovered, Kumamoto continues and then hits his own knees – the scene continues for 30 minutes and the audience continue to jeer, whilst some leave. Shimizu talks about this as a kind of 'jouissance' and mentions the Japanese audience who have seen the same sequence and describe the red slap mark on the woman's back as 'beautiful'; talks about this in terms of a national alienation from - and denial of - violence.*

*Drinks afterwards, many discussions. Talking to Hino and Shimizu, I'm so tired I can't focus, but they talk about Fukushima and how the community want the area to be radioactive so they can claim compensation, and how one farmer went against this so he could sell his produce, and the community didn't like him going against them. One rice farmer killed himself.*

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<sup>108</sup>Adam Broinowski is an Australian performer and academic, he worked with Gekidan Kaitaisha from 2001 – 2005.

*Long walk home in cold at 3am. See elderly homeless man en route, setting up his bed in bus shelter, Jon speaks to him – he is out of work. Jon talks about when he went to Tohoku to help with the clear-up effort (after 3/11), and the mess that it is in – people permanently living in prefab houses that were designed as temporary accommodation.*

According to Carol Martin the ‘... beating scene in "Bye-Bye" nearly caused a riot in Zagreb, Croatia, in 1996, when spectators first whistled, then shouted, "Stop it!" to try to halt the violence. The agitation escalated until a man in the first row stood up, grabbed the offending performer and threw him down. But even as the audience signalled its approval of the intervention, the performer got up and resumed beating the woman's back. In post-civil-war Zagreb, spectators grasped that intervening in an aesthetic event would not, even symbolically, stop the violence of the world’ (Martin, 2001). Shimizu has previously reflected on the event, stating that perhaps the audience member ‘... went on stage hoping the actor would look at him. Meaning he met something he didn’t expect, another completely different from him. He was exposed to the Other. I think a split appeared there ... a hidden division which cannot usually be seen appeared. You could see the dividing line rip the space open between the two men. In this moment the essence of their bodies normally confined by Image was revealed by accident’ (Otori & Shimizu, 2001: 84 – 5). I would suggest that the jouissance that Shimizu has discussed exists in the moment that he describes here, where a ‘split’ reveals the ‘Other’.

### ***Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February***

*Long discussion/practice. [...] <sup>109</sup>In relation to my points in the discussion about the plurality of self, Shimizu comments that he thinks that historically Japanese people did not view themselves as individuals, so they accepted Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the rhizome, and that a consequence of this was that when the economic bubble burst*

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<sup>109</sup>I will not outline my extended notes from the discussion here, but to summarise, we discussed in detail the notion of ‘labour’, with particular reference to post-Fordism, and myself, Mikyoung and Yabe Kumiko outlined our ideas in response to Shimizu’s question of how he can represent the notion of ‘non time’. The discussion included topics such as the homeless in Japan (in terms of the ‘other’), and the nation state.

*there was no sense of individual responsibility. He said that now the situation has changed somewhat with the economic downturn, a new conservatism has emerged, in which people operate in terms of self-protection. This conversation reminds me of Shimizu, Hino and Sasaki's<sup>110</sup> comments a few days ago over drinks, when they criticised the rise of Japanese nationalism after last year's disaster. They explained that the idea of 'kizuna' had become popular, which means bonds or connections between people, but which can also traditionally be used to mean the rope that tethers animals (as far as I understood it). I take their criticism to mean that although they clearly viewed individuals helping each other as important, they argued that this sense of kizuna had been co-opted by the nation state to create a revived nationalism.*



Figure 66: *Jouissance System* in performance, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012. Left to right, Kumamoto Kenjiro, Aota Reiko, Yabe Kumiko, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, Aoki Yuhei, Hino Hiruko and Honma Ryoji, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

<sup>110</sup>Sasaki Katsumi is a playwright who collaborates with Kaitaisha.

### ***Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February***

*Sleep late after exhaustion from late night after rehearsal and sickness last night (this is the second time, I irrationally worry that it is something to do with irradiation, when it is probably just tiredness and a different diet).*

*In rehearsal, small moments of note:*

- *Hino shows Ishi how to 'catch' Honma in their sequence; Aota demonstrates and she jumps up, she is so light on her feet, cat-like. Honma and Ishi practice the sequence and Hino watches with a huge grin on her face, she is proud of her 'protégés'.*
- *Hino goes thorough basic training with us.*
- *Group warms up; the group feels so connected.*
- *Group system of mutual care/help - Ishi and then Aota quietly show (new member) Aoki Yuhei the warm up/basic technique.*

*Hino and Shimizu explain the notion of 'unborn':*

*The exact form of the figure is not fixed, and that figure begins to construct their outline towards the human figure; imitate that form. Once you learn the prototype you pick up another movement that you have abandoned and you construct yourself that way again. If you choose the way that you abandoned, you may not be able to construct the human figure anymore; you may not be able to stand.*

*Hino demonstrates her 'Unborn' sequence and we all copy:*

- 1.) Collapsed on floor, legs apart*
- 2.) Lift right leg up with hands and place on floor (knee up)*
- 3.) Push it down and collapse over it*
- 4.) Push left leg – body goes to opposite side, and then body goes to my left side*
- 5.) Push each knee to either side to get up*
- 6.) Eventually up to standing and push right arm up with left hand, then arm lets go, you begin to collapse and the impulse makes the left foot step forward*
- 7.) You collapse again and repeat*

*We all copy Hino and then find our own way as she guides us. It is hard, my body won't do what I want it to at first, but eventually I get it. We all practice together; it feels good to do a group action as I haven't done this with Kaitaisha in the last few projects, as*

*time was so limited. Shimizu, Hino, and Sasaki Katsumi watch as we all practice, and they give us feedback.*

*Later (now late - 23:30 - and some members have had to leave to catch late trains home, all working tomorrow) - Kumamoto reads 'Senjinkun'<sup>111</sup>. Kumamoto reads text line-by-line and Aoki repeats after him. It is as if Aoki is being trained to obey the regulations (particularly relevant, as he is 17 years old). Shimizu and Hino arrange Aoki in a relaxed position and Mikyoung (watching) imitates a slouched position. Shimizu and Hino notice and like this, so she is put on stage: Kumamoto walks forward speaking line by line, Mikyoung slouches against the wall repeating after him, Aoki sits in a chair with his back to the audience. It is interesting to watch, Mikyoung does not speak the words accurately, but quite well. Knowing what the text means, it is hard not to see the scene in relation to Mikyoung's Korean identity and to see her body in relation to the 'comfort women' in WWII<sup>112</sup>.*



**[Please see at this point 'Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *Jouissance System* 2012: 'Unborn Sequence']**

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<sup>111</sup>*Senjinkun* (The Instructions for the Battlefield) was a pocket-sized military code issued to soldiers in the Imperial Japanese forces on 8 January 1941. The military regulations forbid soldiers from surrender or capture, and thus implied that suicide was the only option.

<sup>112</sup>Mikyoung Jun Pearce has collaborated with Kaitaisha since 2004; throughout the collaborations, Jun Pearce and Kaitaisha have critically explored the history of Korean 'comfort women', who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese army in WWII. The issue remains controversial, as, although the Japanese government has apologised for any mistreatment the women suffered, it has denied that women were forced to act as prostitutes or sexual slaves.



Figures 67: *Jouissance System* in rehearsal, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012: Hino Hiruko demonstrates 'Unborn' sequence for Mikyoung Jun Pearce, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

### ***Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February***

*Beautiful sunny day. Walked to park and gathered 'seedpods' (that is what they appear to be to me) for my performance presentation. Cafe for notes/script learning.*

#### *Rehearsal:*

*Warm-up. Start to prepare my presentation – panicking, I feel underprepared and struggle to focus as the lights are rigged around me in the small studio.*

*Shimizu films us for a scene that he is experimenting with (he might use footage in performance): Walk forwards as a group 'carrying'. Aota goes forward and falls to floor, Honma goes to her and kicks her back lightly, she tumbles and we all respond physically in different ways: Mikyoung 'guards' group; Aoki catches Yabe Kumiko; I run away on all fours. This then changed so we walk at 'salary man' pace for three lines diagonally across the space, then exit backstage. I enter first from door and Aota*

*follows – same as above. We practice the ‘salary man walk’<sup>113</sup>, whilst 1) brushing shoulder 2) covering eyes 3) looking up 4) looking at watch.*

*Three chairs in row: Mikyoung, Honma, Ishi. Told to move muscles spontaneously, as if they have not moved before, then to collapse to floor and begin the ‘Unborn’ sequence. Aoki sits behind reading Senjinkun text. This is changed, so three women sit on chairs (including me), and Ishi and Honma do their ‘catching’ sequence behind us. I am told to just sit still, as this may follow my scene, and to think about my experience internally; then later I may collapse into my ‘square’ of performance space again as a Geiger counter sounds. Lots of changes etc. as Shimizu tries out different ideas.*

*In the night, I was thinking about my scene and I realised what the Japanese audience would read, and perhaps what Shimizu wants to convey through me; what I do relates to Fukushima and ‘spoiled’ land. I don’t know what to make of this.*

### ***Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February***

*Met Hino in the studio office early afternoon; she wanted to tell us what Shimizu had decided he would like us to do. Our presentations (on Saturday) had prompted many thoughts for him, and my scene (entitled ‘Digitisation’ or ‘Blood in Earth’) was outlined in detail<sup>114</sup>:*

- 1) Stand on heap of earth as audience enter. Brian Eno track plays. Speak – describing atmosphere/what I see as audience enter – anything. Camera in mouth; image of this is projected on wall behind me*
- 2) When full house, continue a little, then remove camera*
- 3) My ancestor picture is projected*
- 4) Begin to speak about ancestors – profile/history/myth – anything is fine, write a text. At first stood still, then walking along the projection, some gestures may happen, still speaking*

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<sup>113</sup>This walking style, based on the hurried and absent-minded yet focussed walk of the Japanese salaryman was developed during the 2005 *Dream Regime* performance in Tokyo and performed by Matt Beere.

<sup>114</sup>My notes here are a partial transcript of Hino’s outline of my scene, thus, as is often the case when I am paraphrasing discussions in the Kaitaisha studio, as conducted in English or through translation, my use of the English language is phrased the manner that Hino speaks (as a non-fluent second-language English speaker).

- 5) *Return to earth. Carrying seeds in left hand, throw to earth and some kind of kiss to earth. Mud on face. Situation makes me into some kind of animal, impulsive feeling. I enclose the earth in plastic and hang from ceiling. The earth cannot go anywhere – neither up nor down. I look to the hanging earth, I am already transformed. Speak the Mawddach text and disappear*<sup>115</sup>.

*Last Scene:*

*Two types of earth: hanging earth and projected earth. Rebecca is tied to the earth and Kumamoto is tied to the earth. Some kind of everyday conversation between us: R – What did you do today? K – describes his day job of support work for people with disabilities.*

*Hino talks about the marathon walk yesterday*<sup>116</sup> *and how she saw things as if for the first time – like the ‘Nazi’ salute poster, despite the fact that we were walking in an area where she had grown up and now lived. She said that when the earthquake happened last year the street we walked on with her was completely full of people – ‘like the end of the earth’. She stayed inside and hid under the table, her cat hid itself. She said many people walked home for 10 hours with bare feet. Many bikes were bought and they sold out. She has not mentioned any of this before, despite my questions about last year’s disaster.*

*Rehearsal:*

*Quickly write my text as others warm-up. In the warm-up, Ochiai Toshiyuki (the sound technician) plays ‘Psycho killer’ to sound test Mikyoung’s new scene; Mikyoung starts singing and she gradually increases her volume. Ochiai plays the song again and everyone gradually stops warming up and moves to the side to watch her. It is an impromptu performance, and I admire the way that everyone seems to sense – and respect – what each performer needs in order to prepare for their own part. We go through my scene in detail.*

*Instructions to Honma from Shimizu: ‘when you put the chair down, receive the atmosphere from the chair; that atmosphere makes you sit down’ (I liked this description, as it is typical of how Kaitaisha give performers directions).*

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<sup>115</sup>I wrote the Mawddach text based on my observations whilst walking on the Mawddach estuary in Wales.

<sup>116</sup>The Tokyo Marathon Walk was attended by several Kaitaisha members.





[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *Jouissance System* 2012: ‘Psychokiller Scene’]

### ***Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February***

*AM – Ueno, lunch (tempura), walk to studio. 3pm arrive, take down pictures from photo exhibition, and wrap them. Translate ‘kokutai’<sup>117</sup> body drawing and text that Shimizu gives me into English. Learn lines. Gradually all arrive, help set up, eat and warm-up.*

*Hino explains that in the last scene they want me to stand in black pants, and nothing else, with my back to the audience, with the kokutai body drawn on my back; she said that it is fine if I am not comfortable doing this.*

*Aoki’s line is translated for me: ‘my dream is not to be a public servant’. He is a 17-year-old student, a new company member; Shimizu heard him make this statement to Sasaki in conversation one night after rehearsal, and that all his school friends aspired to be public servants. Shimizu decided that he would like him to use this line in the performance.*

*During our discussion about the homeless in Tokyo a few days ago (following Mikyoung showing the images she had taken, as a photographer, of the homeless walking the streets), Shimizu recalled that he had a text that Sasaki<sup>118</sup> had written about the homeless, and he wanted to use this in the performance. Aota is now reading this in the first scene, Hino gives me a loose translation of the text:*

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<sup>117</sup>*Kokutai* (literally ‘national body/structure’) is a politically loaded word in the Japanese language, translatable as ‘sovereign’, ‘national identity; national essence; national character’ or ‘national polity; body politic; national entity; basis for the Emperor’s sovereignty; Japanese constitution’. The image that I translated was of the kokutai body, where the body parts relate to the structure of the nation state, for example, the head is ‘Pontifex Maximus’ (or ‘Emperor’ in Japan), followed by (religious) ‘ceremony’ and ‘parents’, and the body is the ‘state’, ‘police’, ‘palace’, and so forth.

<sup>118</sup>Sasaki has a part time day job as a security guard at one of Tokyo’s parks, and the text I have included here is based on a homeless woman that he regularly saw during this work.

[...] She usually slept while she was standing. She stood day and night under the railroad of Okachimachi station. Her red coat was soiled by exhaust gas, wind, and rain, so it is rare for people to notice her in such darkness under the railroad. Sometimes she leaned against a wall, but she did not look exhausted. She seemed to continually stay at the same point, not so much moving. I do not know how long she had been there, but I first saw her a year ago. Nearby her, there were those who slept in cardboard boxes, but I have never seen her talk with them. I have never seen her eat anything. She is totally different from them. There was no sense of living like them for her who kept standing. They each had some kind of job, drank liquor, talked, listened to the radio, and they even fought. But she never joined them, and they also did not try to interfere with her. I thought to myself; she did nothing except just keep standing there.

Was a city created as the place to live? There are many forms to the city, but I can understand a city is felt the need as the residence place for making living. And when people enclose the city with a wall, setting a gate and a barrier as dividing inside and outside of the city in order to keep safe, people who choose to live outside of the city have had the purpose of just living. No, this is not purpose; surviving, surviving like animals meant living. There were some who become thieves or wanderers among those who lived outside of the city. Or there were some who began to establish new communities, to make living in other places. I guess some cities were made by such way, so to speak, during the period when there were no villages and hamlets, people would break new ground to make the place where community based on. Those who had expelled or exiled by themselves would find their new living at the place out of the city. Because if they just looked around the city from outside, they could not survive without starvation [...] (Text from *Jouissance System*, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012, translated from Japanese to English by Hino, H.)<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>The text goes on to discuss the notion of community in relation to theatre and ‘nation’, and to tell the story of the homeless woman. I have included a short excerpt from Sasaki’s text to give one example text that was used in ‘*Jouissance System*’. When I began collaborating with Kaitaisha in 2004 the company used little text in their work, however in recent years Kaitaisha have begun to use text as an important part of the composition. I would suggest that, on reflection, the decision to use more text was partly influenced by the *Dream Regime* Project through international practitioners bringing texts to the devising process. In the work, the text is part of the composition, rather than forming a logical narrative; a performer might utter a single line as he continues his action, or sit at a desk and read an extensive text. The text comes from a range of sources: historical, philosophical, and literary; or texts written by Shimizu, Sasaki, or individual performers. I have also included this excerpt to illustrate the difficulty for me, as someone with limited Japanese, of understanding a text that is delivered in the rehearsal process. I am reliant on a translator to give me a brief summary, and I will be given a translation a few days later, dependent on time, and this translation will often be difficult to understand (as illustrated here). This lack of understanding in terms of the texts can set me outside of the rehearsal process; however, I always have a certain understanding of the texts as they relate to discussions, my history of collaborating with Kaitaisha, or the performance composition. I often deliver text (usually that I have written myself) as part of the performance (in English) and this is translated for the Japanese audience either as a projection during the performance itself, or as part of the programme notes.

*How can I account for this process? Shimizu and Hino watch; they see people, little things, very personal (compared to before). Shimizu tries things out, composes as he goes, but at the same time has very set compositional ideas that he wants to use. He tries it until it works, and has an instinct for when something does not work – like my costume – which he asked me to change until, in his view, it worked. This decision-making process is all in collaboration with Hino.*

*Mikyoung plays at boxing with Ishi as we wait to begin rehearsing the next section and Shimizu says ‘let’s use this!’ Shimizu films a scene in night vision, he is very tired, he says he got angry on the train when a young man slouches on the priority seat on the metro, and again later when the salesman questions him on what the camera he is buying (for my mouth) is for. Hino tells me that there has been a recent spate of men using such discreet cameras to film up women’s skirts on the crowded metro train. Shimizu says his back hurts, and he needs some tea. The rehearsal process is clearly exhausting Shimizu, I imagine that he is getting very little sleep as he stays up late working on the website or the dramaturgy.*

*Third Scene (I watch):*

- *Three performers are sat on chairs that are arranged in a row facing the audience. They move from their nervous system state*
- *Honma gets up and begins ‘unborn’ movement*
- *Ishi enters and begins ‘catching’ sequence with Honma*
- *Meanwhile – Mikyoung and Yabe continue ‘unborn’ movements*
- *Yabe gets on the chair and hits the air*
- *Aoki enters and sits on the chair at the back*
- *Ishi places Honma on his chair and exits*
- *Unborn movements continue*
- *Aoki begins text – walks forwards speaking as Yabe hits, then she hits his cheek*
- *Yabe sits and Aoki goes to her like a dog – he says “I don’t want to be a civil servant”, Yabe: “I would rather be unborn”*
- *Blackout. [Shimizu says everything is too fast]*



[Please see at this point ‘Documentation of Practice, Disc One, *Jouissance System* 2012: ‘Direction & Choreography’’]

*Hino apologises and says that she has thrown away the ‘seedpods’ that I had collected in the park to use as part of my scene. She explains that some people think that the radiation expelled from Fukushima might have travelled to ponds and trees in Tokyo parks, and that perhaps the seedpods were therefore not safe. I feel embarrassed, as I did not know that I was bringing something potentially contaminated into the studio space. A few days ago, Shimizu mentioned to Hino that she should be careful not to source the bag of soil that she was going to buy for my scene from the Fukushima area.*

*Mikyong and I talk about hierarchy and how it is played out (in Kaitaisha and in Asia in general). This hierarchy seems to be integral to how Kaitaisha works, for example, Irie (new company member) running forwards to wipe my feet after I rehearse my part and my feet are covered in the mud that I perform on (I am acutely embarrassed), or Yabe or Yasuji trying to stop me from sweeping the floor (they are younger company members), or Kumamoto, Aota, and Ishi training Aoki.*



Figure 68: Tokyo, January – February 2012: ‘Seedpods’ that are potentially contaminated, photo Rebecca Woodford-Smith.

### ***Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February***

*Warm-up. Begin rehearsing much later than 3pm agreed start time.*

*Set lights for my opening scene, practice end of second scene, and continue through the other scenes. Shimizu explains that the kokutai (Nation Body) drawn on my back relates to Kumamoto, who is stood in a separate area of light to my left, also with the kokutai drawn on his back. According to Shimizu, during the Meiji era the government drew their Nation Body system from a Christian understanding of power structures, so my (Western) body relates to Kuma. Shimizu talks about how he believes that the nation state is currently playing a role in controlling both inner life and daily life, particularly in terms of the nation state using the 03/11 disaster to affirm their power status. Shimizu wants to show through our bodies the 'exposed' nation body, and its grotesqueness (as in the projected image of the inside of my mouth).*

*I'm really stressed tonight after rehearsal, feel as though I have not gone over my part in detail yet; the first performance is tomorrow.*

### ***Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February***

*We rehearse until an hour before the performance. Debate about whether my part is (unintentionally, on my behalf) overtly sexual and the 'male gaze', instigated by Mikyoung's observations as I rehearse my scene. First performance (full house), felt intensely brilliant. Post show drinks, interesting conversations with audience members, many of whom I know as they regularly come to Kaitaisha shows. Jon loved the performance and said he did not want it to end. I continue my discussion with Hino about the 'male gaze', and she talks about her time as a butoh dancer performing as a table dancer in Hijikata's club. Hino said that Hijikata intended to deliberately subvert the notion of the male gaze, through humanising both the dancers and the audience, and he also encouraged his dancers to work in such environments in order to move beyond the typical underground art scene audiences. Hino said that this kind of 'training' with Hijikata has changed how she views the audience, where she feels a connection to audience members (according to her, as a table dancer, she was empowered rather than objectified – and the audience also saw her in this way).*

### ***Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February***

*Meet at 5pm, subtle changes. Second performance (full house). Hino is tired – I could see this in her performance - she is cross with herself and practices in the studio after the performance. Post show drinks, interesting conversations with Fueda Uichiro and Sugiura Chizuko<sup>120</sup>. Fueda says that Shimizu's use of the space is incredibly well crafted.*

### ***Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February***

*AM – pack. Meet at 5pm, subtle changes. Third performance (full house). Post show drinks, interesting conversations, party until the early hours – we dance, eat, drink, and talk. Very sad goodbye, Aota and Hino in tears, I feel so sad to leave Kaitaisha and, for the final time, Canvas studio.*

**[The final performance can be seen in performance documentation DVD 5, *Jouissance System*, Canvas Studio, Tokyo (2012)]**

### **Retrospective**

Following the inevitable post-show exhaustion and deflation, 24-hour journey back to the UK, and a period of jetlag and adjustment, I am able to reflect on the collaboration and my time in Tokyo. As discussed in Chapter One, Milet considers the retrospective transformation of self, which acquires form ‘... at the end of a crossing, of a trial of endurance ...’ (Milet, 1995). I have a strong sense of this retrospection when, months later, I recall and write about the events, read my notes, and look at the documentation whilst sat at my desk in west Wales. I vividly recall the sights, smells, and feelings of a particular ‘past’ moment, yet this ‘past’ opens, is framed and made available in an endlessly unfolding present ‘event-space’ as it is happening again, right now, as I write this; and, as I develop the notion in some detail below, I am retrospectively transformed.

The rehearsal period leading up to the first performance was intense and exhausting, as I have attempted to illustrate in my diary entries. As I have described in previous chapters, the first night of a Kaitaisha performance tends to be the first full run through,

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<sup>120</sup>Actors Fueda and Sugiura have guest-performed in previous Kaitaisha performances.

and my lone presence on stage as audience members entered heightened my uncertainty in terms of how ‘Jouissance System’ might unfold. I attempt to account for this opening scene in what follows:

*I was alone in the performance space as the audience entered. I stood on a mound of earth with a microphone and camera inside my mouth; the image of my mouth projected. As audience members entered and walked past me, I began to describe both them and other sensations; ‘green bag ... walking quickly ... cold air’. Eventually I began to speak a text about my family history; an image of my ancestors was projected, and I began to transform, sinking downwards, my face meeting the earth. Rising upwards, I turned and moved forwards and sang. Moving across the space, I slowly embodied a series of gestures and movements and danced them through my nervous system; a dance of the memories of the gestures of others. The lighting shifted, and a translation of my text was projected. As I danced, I continued to speak fragmented words from my text. Another performer entered the space, my dance disappeared, and I shifted my gaze, walking parallel to the audience, commentating on what I saw – ‘Black hat ... eyes looking at me’<sup>121</sup>.*

As I reflect on this and my later scene, I have a particular awareness of my transformation through my collaborations with Kaitaisha (since 2004) that I am only able to see clearly in retrospect (thus recalling Heidegger on experience and time in transformations, with which this work began). In ‘Dream Regime#2’ (Broellin Schloss, Germany, 2004) I sang a psalm, which I have sung in almost every Kaitaisha performance that I have appeared in since that time. I can trace my own transformation over time; introspectively, in terms of how I think/feel I have changed and how Shimizu and Hino have framed me in the performance compositions. In my first Kaitaisha collaborations I was presented as fragile and doll-like, yet, as I have changed and aged, Shimizu and Hino have commented on an ‘inner strength’, and have proceeded to frame me in this way. Yet I continue to sing the psalm, a thread that connects these performances’ history and my own transformation, as illustrated in Figures 69 - 71.

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<sup>121</sup> This account is based on my notebook entries and recollection of the performance of *Jouissance System* with Gekidan Kaitaisha, Tokyo, February 2012; it is written after the performance. I employ this mode of writing in order to attempt to illuminate my sensed and felt experience of the performance.



Figures 69– 71: Singing the psalm: *Dream Regime#3*, Japan Foundation, Tokyo, December 2005, left to right, Hino Hiruko and Rebecca Woodford-Smith; *Bye Bye Reflection*, Owl Spot, Toshima Performing Arts Centre, Tokyo, March 2008, left to right, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, Suzuki Gonbe, Kumamoto Kenjiro, Aota Reiko; *Jouissance System*, Free Space Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012, Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photos Miyauchi Katsu.



What is of particular interest to me here, is that as I review ‘*Jouissance System*’ and such transformations over time, I am keenly aware of how I have been framed in the composition. In my view, I represent something that Kaitaisha are only able to represent through my body, by which I mean its visible markers of individual, ethnic, and cultural identity. This is particularly striking in the final scene, where Kumamoto and I stand on separate areas of the stage; on both our bodies is drawn the *kokutai* (Nation body). Kumamoto faces the audience and pierces a bag full of soil that is suspended from the rig; the soil slowly falls to the floor, he goes down to his knees and begins to rub the soil into his skin. He speaks a poetic text, which includes the lines “Now the earth is also going to suffocate ... I want to save the whole earth from extinction ... I am not the sick. I am healthy. I am afraid of me because I know God's hope. My soil has been contaminated”. As Kumamoto rubs the soil into his skin, I enter the performance space and stand with my back to the audience, placing the camera/microphone into my mouth, I begin to speak the Nation Body text (in English), which is drawn on my bare back; “Parents ... Police ... Foreign affairs ... Navy ... Army ... Treasury ... Agriculture ... Education ... People ... Palace”, and so on. The microphone against my mouth creates a distorted amplified sound; my words no longer feel my own.

This is the final scene of the performance and thus the final image that the audience are left with is of contaminated earth, self-sacrifice, and the ‘nation state’; clearly, in the context of the Fukushima disaster this is a loaded image. What strikes me here is that although I was aware of the image created through the composition of this scene at the time, it is only as I look at it in retrospect that I can see the depth of complexity and meaning created through the juxtaposition of Kumamoto and myself in this way.

Perhaps in my retrospective glance, which allows a certain distancing and the possibility that I thematise my self as other, I begin to regard myself as an audience member might. This brings to mind the understanding of the self and other in Noh theatre, as discussed by Konparu Kunio. Drawing on principles laid out by Zeami, Konparu asserts that:

... the view of the performer as seen by the audience is truly an objective view, detachable from the eye of the performer himself. The view of the performer as seen by his own eyes is a subjective view, and this should be called a “self view”. This is not an objective viewing with the mind’s eye, detached from one’s own physical eyes. When the performer sees himself with the eyes of the others, he sees another true view beyond what his own physical senses can see, and this creates a kind of “detached vision”, a fusion of the minds of actor and

audience or of self and others, and only when this happens is he truly able to perceive himself as a performer. (Konparu, 2005: 16)



Figures 72 and 73: *Jouissance System*, the final scene; Canvas Studio, Tokyo, February 2012; Kumamoto Kenjiro and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, photo Miyauchi Katsu.

This notion of ‘detached vision’ is of particular interest to me in the context of performing to a (primarily) Japanese audience. During the first scene of ‘*Jouissance System*’, as the audience entered and I described them, speaking observations into the microphone, I had a sense of them absorbing my time, and vice versa; I observed and was observed. In my experience, Japanese audience members are silent and still, often wearing facemasks that hide their expressions; engaging with audience members as individuals made me sense them differently, and I sensed a connection between us. Yet, as I discussed in Chapter Three (page 121), for some of the Japanese audience I might be regarded as distinctly ‘other’ and viewed in direct contrast to the Japanese members of Kaitaisha.

Within such a framework of self-other relations (as Konparu describes) it is necessary for me to recognise this self ‘otherness’, and in order for me to ‘truly see myself’ (as a performer) I am required to view myself through the eyes of the other to create a fusion. Such a fusion, in Konparu’s terms, exists between audience/performer, performer/performer, and self/other. I would suggest that during the moment of the performance itself I experience a fusion between myself and other performers; this is particularly so in *murekehai*<sup>122</sup>, where I operate through extending and reflecting my gaze and sensations. Clearly, there is a contradiction here, where, in the performance moment I regard my self as fused with the other, yet, post-performance and through a retrospective view, I recognise a distinct separation between myself and other performers. I revisit this problematic below, addressing it in terms of the ‘I’ and ‘me’ of the self.

As I have indicated above, within the Kaitaisha process I have developed a set of sequences and texts - both independently, and through Kaitaisha’s techniques – which have been used repeatedly as part of my Kaitaisha ‘repertoire’, such as the psalm, or the ‘seadog’ sequence. In the moment of rehearsal, I am aware that I am framed and presented in a particular way through what are effectively signature practices, yet I am also operating intuitively as a performer, and I am unable to see my ‘self’ clearly in the performance composition as a whole, and what this might signify, until I have a retrospective view, and the possibility, which comes with that retrospective view, of benefiting from a feedback loop of self-enquiry and critique.

For example, the second time I performed with Kaitaisha was at Broellin Schloss, Germany (2004) in a huge converted barn. Throughout the duration of the performance, I sat on a beam high above the performance space, and eventually performed my part in the last scene, on the beam, and then in the performance space itself. Clearly, I was spatially and temporally separated from the other performers, and, on reflection, I can see that this has been the case in every Kaitaisha performance since. I seem to be isolated from the rest of the performers, sometimes performing as a duet, but rarely as part of the group. What I recognise on reflection is that I am being imported and positioned by Kaitaisha as ‘other’, and that as a racially, ethnically, and culturally-different group, they are able to portray something through me (as a vessel, or *chora*),

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<sup>122</sup> As discussed on page 180.

with which I have been compliant (but initially uncomprehending). My own compliance and initial incomprehension derive, on reflection, from my sense that I was an invited contributor, hence a guest. In terms of retrospection, I needed to be able to reflect at length, and from a critical distance, to differently interpret the role I seem to have been offered and adopted.



Figure 74: *Dream Regime#2*; Pro. Existence Festival, Broellin Schloss, Germany, September 2004. Left to right, Rebecca Woodford-Smith and Adam Broinowski, photo Jens Femerling.

*Chora*, a notion whose significance I have already alluded to above, is a term initially used by Plato in *Timaeus* to signal a receptacle, a space or an interval; it is neither being nor nonbeing, but an interval between, in which the ‘forms’ were originally held (Zeyl, 2013). The term has maternalistic overtones, as Plato describes the three natures in the creation of the universe in metaphorical terms as that of the family, where the mother is a receptacle of space; she is a cracked vessel, a filled vessel and finally an empty vessel that importantly does not take on and retain the form of what has filled her. Gregory Ulmer discusses the notion of *chora* in relation to the (abandoned) project between

Derrida and Eisenman to design a folie for Villette Park (Ulmer, 1994). Derrida describes *chora* in Plato's terms:

... Chora receives everything and gives place to everything, but Plato insists that it has to be a virgin place, and that it has to be totally foreign, totally exterior to anything that it receives. Since it is absolutely blank, everything that is printed on it is automatically effaced. It remains foreign to the imprint it receives; so in a sense it does not receive anything – it does not receive what it receives nor does it give what it gives. Everything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, whilst remaining in it. It is thus an impossible surface – it is not even a surface, because it has no depth. (Kipnis, forthcoming)

Derrida describes *chora* in terms of *marking a space apart*, and as I retrospectively look at how I am positioned and framed within the Kaitaisha composition, I now regard myself as repeatedly performing the function of *chora* that marks space and remains foreign to the imprint that it receives. My role as *chora* thus involves momentarily holding onto something in the performance itself and in Japan; and once I leave I do not leave a trace of myself behind, nor am I transformed by its inscription; I regard myself here as a space holder but also as a (European) shifter, who does not hold the *place*. In this sense, it could be argued that Kaitaisha project otherness onto me, and thereby 'poach' me, regarding me, ambivalently, as both a blank vessel that they can 'fill', and, usefully, in political terms, as a European blankness. In my use of the term 'poaching' I am referring to de Certeau's claim that everyday life consists of a process of poaching on the territory of others, through using the rules that already exist in culture in a way that is influenced, but never wholly determined, by those rules. This model allows the audience to appropriate a text (or, in this case, myself) for itself (de Certeau, 1984).

What is revealing about this retrospective perspective, which I eventually gained an understanding of, is the sense that I am portrayed as 'other' in the performance, and yet, within the immediacy of the rehearsals and performances, I do not regard myself in this way, nor am I made aware of it. As I have illustrated above, the Kaitaisha 'space' offers me a sense of belonging, as opposed to the streets of Tokyo, where I am overtly aware of my 'otherness'. I experienced this during the Tokyo Marathon Walk, where, despite my familiarity with Tokyo, I constantly felt alien to the environment I was in, while the environment equally felt alien to me. This perceived framing as 'other' is also striking, as within the rehearsal process I experience the sense of belonging to a complex system, where I have an intricate understanding of modes of communication and concepts that

underpin Kaitaisha's work. This might mean in practice that if given a direction such as 'centre!'<sup>123</sup> I am immediately able to grasp the complex physical and philosophical meaning behind such an instruction. As I have already suggested in Chapter Two, I would argue that over the duration of my practice with Kaitaisha we have developed a particular way of communicating that relies on a limited verbal and extensive physical vocabulary, and that the understanding of their training is rooted in these complex 'codes' of communication.

As I am attempting to convey, there are clearly inherent contradictions in how I position self and otherness here. On the one hand, I regard myself as part of the Kaitaisha process, where I have a deep understanding of complex codes, have close personal relationships with Kaitaisha members, and experience myself as part of the collective in the moment of performance and rehearsal. On the other hand, retrospectively, I realise that I regard myself as distinctly 'other', in terms of a sense of myself as *chora*, inscribed on by Shimizu, Kaitaisha performers, and audience members, and made spatially and temporally distinct by the performance composition. This ambiguity becomes apparent only as I remap the process retrospectively and I experience, with sudden clarity, myself as 'other'. I would argue that such a moment of realisation is akin to Ulmer's notion of hyperbolic intuition or the "Aha!" moment of sudden, certain realisation (Ulmer, 1994).

This contradiction within the self can be related to the temporal self, discussed by Sandra Rosenthal (2000) as she outlines the nature of the self characterised by George Mead as the "I" and the "me". Rosenthal states that:

For Mead, the "I" and the "me" aspects of the self are neither metaphysically nor numerically distinct but rather are functional distinctions that, in their inseparable interrelation, constitute the self. The "I" is the functional pole or functional dimension of the self as the immediacy of the present, spontaneity, creativity, and the individual perspective, the subject pole. The "me" is the functional dimension of the self that represents the constraints of the past, of tradition, of culture and institutionalized practices, the shaping of the self by the community perspective or what Mead calls the generalized other ... The "I" as subject can never exist as an object for consciousness. The "I" by its very function can never be an object of reflection, because in becoming reflected upon, it becomes a "me." (Rosenthal, 2000: 94)

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<sup>123</sup>In practice Kaitaisha work with the notion that the performers focal point and energy extend from their 'centre'; that being their abdomen.

Mead's understanding of the self locates the "me" as the social self (the past) and the "I" as responding to this (present). Rosenthal, quoting Mead, explains that '... the observer of our self-conscious conduct is not the "I" but the rapidly changing series of "me's" that occur in experience' (Ibid). This rapidly changing series of "me's" is defined in terms of the organised set of attitudes of others, or the accumulated understanding of the generalised other. In these terms, the "I" is the self as subject, and the "me" is the self as object; hence, as I perceive myself practicing in Kaitaisha retrospectively I am regarding myself both as subject and object simultaneously. The "I" is located in the present moment, and thus importantly, as Mead states, a true "I" cannot be produced on reflection, as reflection can only yield an object of reflection (Ibid: 95). In such terms, I can never truly account for the present performance moment, and myself, as it is always already past.

Rosenthal goes on to outline that '... Mead claims, in extreme form, that the "I" is "fictitious" in that it is always out of sight of itself' (Ibid), and this can be viewed in terms of an I-me dynamic and dialogue where there is a '... continual uncovering and covering of its ongoing development' (Ibid: 98). The self is thus defined in such terms as a *process*, rather than as a substance, and through this process the self engages in reflection that is '... rooted in the ontologically grounded temporality of the lived body' (Ibid: 99). Importantly, Rosenthal goes on to say that:

The fundamental concern of reflection is not to catch the "I" as an object of thematized reflective awareness – which cannot be done, not to engage in retrospection, remembering what one said or did or thought, but to carry on an inner dialogue and to anticipate and critically evaluate its intended probable results. The inner "I-me" dialogue as it operates in a passing present funded with possibilities emerging from a past and oriented towards a future is nonthematic in that reflexivity is not thematically aware of itself. The "I" addresses and responds to the "me" as object, but without being thematically aware of its own reflexivity, though it can never have a *sense* of reflexivity *in the process of* bending back upon itself. In the active engagement in internal dialogue taking place in the passing present, there is a sense of covering and uncovering, a sense of the "dialogical stretch" of the temporal present. (Ibid: 99 – 100)

Hence, in such terms, the nature of the self is temporally defined, and the retrospective transformation that I discuss here is temporally engaged with and formed by a covering and uncovering. As Rosenthal states, thinking itself lies betwixt and between, where '... one does not experience just a set of remembered "me's," but the passage from an old

“me” to a new “me” via the novel activity of the “I” (Ibid: 102). In Mead’s “I-me” dialogue of reflective awareness the “me” disappears completely in unreflective moments, while in some situations it is “relocated” (Ibid: 103).

I would argue that this sense of ‘the me’ (past) constantly appearing, disappearing, and transforming can be related to the performer-self, as I have defined it. Importantly, Rosenthal defines the self as social in terms of how it is inseparably related to others, and in terms of how the very internal dynamics of selfhood ‘... evince the temporal dynamics of sociality through the way in which the I and me, creativity and conformity, mutually affect and accommodate each other in an ongoing process of adjustment in the passing present’ (Ibid: 107). This self is thus located and interwoven with its experience in the world where, as Rosenthal observes, time flows through and envelops ‘me’ (Ibid: 108). Hence, the performer self that I have located here is always engaged with its own internal and changing processes or dialogues within external temporality, and within these processes it is constantly transforming and being made ‘other’ to itself – without our necessarily being aware of this as such. In the context of my self operating with Kaitaisha, I would suggest that these transformations take place in Bhabha’s described ‘third space’ (as discussed in Chapter One), through performative practices themselves and through cultural and temporal/spatial located experiences, as I have illustrated through my diaristic accounts in this chapter, and that within such experiences the self transforms/forms in the temporal/spatial specificity of the action, but fails to thematise this as such, at that time. The self as defined by Rosenthal is in a state of constant transformation and, as I illustrate in Chapter Four, is dynamic, in flux, and hard to grasp as a singular static unchanging thing. This performer self exists as part of a composition of relations that allow for the transformation of the performer through the collaborative practices that I have described. This draws me towards my conclusion, where I locate the multiplicity of the virtual body that exists in Bhabha’s “inbetween” space as an experience of being (as a performer) which cannot be articulated through a single mode of writing or practice. I argue that my project allows the multiplicity of self that I have outlined to be located within the enquiry as a layered, multifaceted and multi-linear map of performer-bodiness and performer-selfhood.



## CONCLUSION

I propose to address the question here of what new insights can be drawn, in research specific terms, from the complex enquiry that I have engaged with throughout this text and its documented practice components. I have interwoven modes of writing and documentation of practice throughout in order to attempt to account for performance from the perspective of the performer ‘insider’, and I would argue that a collection of such fragments, as opposed to a supposedly representational ‘whole’, provide insights into the complexity of the self of the performer as ‘other’. Key to my project is the notion of the self as a heterogeneous multiplicity, in flux, and difficult to grasp as a singular static unchanging “thing” or quality. I have located the multiplicity of the virtual body that exists in an “inbetween” space (Bhabha, 1994) as an experience of being (as a performer) which cannot be articulated through a single mode of writing or practice, and I propose that my simultaneous use of documented practice and different modes of writing can be understood to make an original contribution to knowledge specific to the disciplines of performance training and mixed-mode performance writing. I would argue that although the writing that I have drawn on is useful to help me articulate what it is to be *the performer self* (*‘me’*) and my sensed and felt experience as a performer in different collaborative situations, it is my practice that is at the centre of the inquiry, as opposed to the widely normalised dominant knowledge status of the published work of the writers that I utilise. In other words, I have arrived at writing in theoretical or philosophical registers via expert performance practices, and not vice versa.

As a practitioner I hold a particular form of tacit knowledge that I engage creatively, on an ongoing basis, over time, and one of the things I address in my inquiry is the issue of how practitioners engaged in research in the academy can transmit such knowledge to researchers in the wider performance research community. Performance-based and practitioner-led research practices contribute to epistemology through addressing the complex issues of *what performers know* and *how they know it*, often without relying predominantly on already-discursivised accounts, and I would suggest that in these terms my project does not re-enact philosophy, but rather both considers philosophical knowledge *through* performance and aims to produce a performance-philosophical

knowledge, whilst exposing the inadequacies of discourses which purport to offer phenomenological accounts of what it is to perform. Throughout the inquiry I have consistently grappled with the question of ‘how to *be* (a performer)’, complicated first by the issue of cultural difference and identity, and second by the issue of how to record and recount the complexities of performer-being for other expert readers/viewers. I argue that through my attempts to capture the complexity of the enquiry I create a layered, multifaceted and multi-linear map of performer-bodiedness and performer-selfhood.

I arrived at my critical enquiry via expert practices in a very particular context, which places me in the field of ‘experiencing the other’ or ‘otherness’. My critical engagement with published writing is therefore informed by my engagement with the complex and unique lived experience of particular practices, and clearly the observations that I draw from this cannot be derived from any other source. I pursued my enquiry in order to attempt to understand how an expert practitioner engages consistently with ‘otherness’, whilst simultaneously immersed in creative practice, and I propose to reflect on this issue in further detail in order to try to arrive at an appropriate conclusion.

I would argue that my inquiry offers new insights and contributes to current research in the fields of performance in the following ways:

**i. The illumination of the *sensed* and *felt* knowledge of the expert practitioner as expressed through interwoven modes of research**

My thesis is framed as a mode of advanced enquiry driven by both a creative and research imperative, and I address here the question of what can be learnt from a complex inquiry of this kind. Whereas these two imperatives engender and allow an engagement with similar sorts of processes, it is clear that the research imperative enables different sorts of reflections to emerge. I have argued throughout that claims of knowing can be made through the form of the practices I engage in, and I have drawn extensively from modes of writing - not simply to illuminate my practice, but rather to participate in different modes of knowing. My research has drawn upon a form of reporting that challenges traditional ways of representing knowledge, as Brad Haseman has discussed in relation to practice as research in ‘A Manifesto for Performative

Research' (2006):

This insistence on reporting research through the outcomes and material forms of practice challenges traditional ways of representing knowledge claims. It also means that people who wish to evaluate the research outcomes also need to experience them in direct (co-presence) or indirect (asynchronous, recorded) form. (Haseman, 2006: 4)

Haseman goes on to observe that '... performative researchers progress their studies by employing variations of: reflective practice, participant observation, performance ethnography, ethnodrama, biographical/autobiographical/narrative inquiry, and the enquiry cycle from action research' (Ibid: 8). I have engaged with many of the forms that Haseman highlights, and woven an auto-reflexive account throughout. It is worth emphasising that individually these elements are not enough to represent the project's complex enquiry, yet as a whole they form something that might begin to illuminate the complexity of the self or selfhood of the performer as other.

My inquiry engaged specifically with qualitative research through a phenomenological approach, which located me as the perceiving subject documenting my perceptions of the research project. The immersive nature of the practice based research meant that I grappled with issues of accounting for a practice that I was intrinsically part of; I addressed this in part in Chapter Five through drawing on a diaristic account of my experience of the rehearsal and performance process whilst collaborating with Kaitaisha (2012), and through adopting Adler and Adler's notion of writing verisimilitude (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 381). My use of such an approach is based on my sense that a first person account of performance-making processes is important in terms of illuminating aspects of the process that cannot be illustrated through retrospective accounts, critical writing, or documentation. I have used the form of the diary in order to invite the reader to step into my acutely felt world, and make visible an aspect of the Kaitaisha rehearsal process that otherwise remains invisible. Through this approach I attempt to highlight the experience of Tokyo as a whole (such as the interpersonal relationships I engage in, and the small observations I experience) as being integral to the rehearsal process and my experience as a performance-maker. I want to emphasise at this point that the experience of the performer is fundamental to both the creative decision-making process and to the disciplinary-specific field of knowledge, and yet I would argue that such experience has, via the first person account, as yet received

relatively little attention from researchers. Hence, through this approach I attempt to bring the experiential world of the performer to the foreground. This approach aims to allow the reader access to one instance at least of the ways performing is experienced, and through its description and dissemination, to contribute to an understanding of the complex expert performer experience.

In terms of established research paradigms, the project attempts to bring the experience of the performer to the foreground through its engagement with a phenomenological understanding of human experience; this is framed by my enquiry into “bodyness” and a move away from both the privileging of Cartesian reflection, or cognition, over sense, and from cognition as a ‘substance’ regarded as ontologically-distinct from sense. Melrose argues that with regards to expert-performance-production contexts the use of the term “the body” is a nonsense (Melrose 2006), and through the inquiry I attempt to deal with Melrose’s proposition that the body in such contexts should rather be regarded and discussed in terms of “**somebody’s expert bodywork, expertly observed**” (Melrose, 2006: 1). In my case, I have attempted to address the body as somebody’s/my expert bodywork, expertly observed as well as experienced.

In relation to the project I have set out to account for, I propose to draw briefly at this point on choreographer William Forsythe’s ‘Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing’<sup>124</sup> as an example of current research work in the field. The project (displayed as a website) examines the organizational structures found in Forsythe’s dance ‘One Flat Thing’, and is reproduced by translating and transforming them into new objects; it is described as a way of visualizing dance that draws on techniques from a variety of disciplines. What is of interest to me is Forsythe’s statement that the project is ‘... a choreographic object. It’s not the body’<sup>125</sup>. He goes on to say that:

Normally all the information about the choreography is embedded in the body, but the body is the choreography. And so I was thinking how could you get information about choreography out there without having a body, and this is one example of how you do that ... The ideas of choreography itself - as opposed to a choreographic instruction or imperative ... are made visible. It’s an object of chorographic knowledge<sup>126</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup><http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu>

<sup>125</sup>Transcribed from ‘William Forsythe discusses Synchronous Objects’, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQdZBOVYLdI>, interview with Forsythe at The Ohio State University, 2009, published on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

<sup>126</sup><http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu>

Through digital media Forsythe aims to simultaneously publish the dance and the ideas surrounding the dance, and in doing so demonstrate the complex organisation it is embedded in. I would suggest that although Forsythe's project reveals much in terms of the complexity of choreography and composition, it importantly fails to reveal the experience of the dancer and thereby it reduces the dancer's body to a piece of data, leaving the viewer with unanswered questions about the making-processes and about the *sensed* and *felt* experience of the expert performer. Importantly, the project is created from the choreographer perspective, and perhaps it reveals something of Forsythe's view of his dancers – that he is interested in them as objects that can be manipulated to reveal his artistic signature through his own expertise. On the basis of the choices he has made, Forsythe's project cannot reveal the unique insider experience that I would argue my project uncovers through engaging with a verbalisation of my experience as a performer, approached as an expert practitioner. I would argue that this verbalisation is possible and indeed necessary if researchers are to transmit sensed and felt performer knowing and the knowledge that the performer, as an artist, brings to the creative decision-making process.

Through engaging with a verbalisation of my sensed and felt performer experience with Kaitaisha throughout the thesis I have offered unique insights into the complexity of the self of the performer as other; into transcultural collaboration; and into performance making. Such a verbalisation of sensed and felt performer knowledge also relates to my experience of phronetic insight, as discussed in Chapter Two in relation to the SMU project, which gave me a reflexive awareness both of what I was doing in the project in my multiple roles as director, choreographer, teacher, and researcher, and of my relationship with the participants, with my co-director, and with the audience; this phronetic insight continually develops, in part, through a verbalisation of the experience, both during the project and retrospectively.

**ii. Accounts for the other's 'trace' in performer training and practice and for the transformation of the performer through collaborative practices**

A primary and persistent question that I addressed is of how to account for the other's 'trace' in performer training, and this also relates to the issue of how an expert practice

engages with ‘otherness’ whilst immersed in creative practice. For example, the Zarrilli workshop prompted a reflection on my own desire for ‘otherness’ within my collaborative work with Kaitaisha, particularly in terms of how I embody their practice. I considered this issue through reflecting on training as specifically located/embodied in both a cultural milieu and the subconscious, and through asking whether, and in what sense, the training that I received through my Kaitaisha collaborations could be taught. I questioned whether I could in turn train other performers in this specifically embodied practice. A key issue is the extent to which the performer I have described myself to be, in the present account, is in control of her choices of action and intervention in performance-making, not least in the context of Kaitaisha’s use of me in the Japanese context. To what extent does expertise, in the trained performer, mean an expert ability to collaborate with the other, in a cultural context that is itself other to that performer?

I have argued that training is located in an *in-between transcultural hybridised place*, and I describe the distributed performer self as a component within a network which is itself, within the collaborative process, transformed through temporal and spatial dislocation, occupying – in Bhabha’s terms - ‘innovative sites of collaboration’ (Bhabha, 1994: 2). I located my project in a place of post-colonial complexity, where I am aware of a historical legacy of borrowing, adoption, and adaption of other-than western performer training by major twentieth century practitioners. The consistency of this borrowing seems to me to suggest that ‘othering’ the performer self has been understood as a way of heightening qualities required in performance, recalling Mnouchkine’s notorious suggestion that the performer is by definition ‘oriental’ (Féral, 1999). My understanding of training is situated in relation to Barba’s engagement with the orient through his ‘Theatre Anthropology’, which, I suggest, however, positions the other as static and as the site of desire. I would identify my own training as post-Barbaesque, and informed by the Heideggerian notion of transformation, in Milet’s account (1995), with which this work begins.

Through my engagement with Kaitaisha I become other on the basis of an alteration that is not absorbed within my identity, but that articulates and directs and divides and splits, and creates, or participates in, an endlessly unfolding transformation of selfhood. A primary research issue is concerned with how I can *account* for my complex understanding of Kaitaisha’s practice and my role in it. I would suggest that the

problematic that I have outlined of translating training and practice arises through this attempt to account for and teach the practice as I regard it *in retrospect*. In the moment of the practice itself, with Kaitaisha, when I am immersed in the practices, the problematic does not exist.

As I have discussed, the problematic that I have encountered lies in the fact that although, through my years of working with Kaitaisha, I clearly carry a trace of, and have a complex understanding of, their practices, I have experienced a sense of emptiness when I attempt to transfer Kaitaisha's training and signature practices to practitioners outside of the Kaitaisha context. My argument is that Kaitaisha's practice is firmly rooted in a particular context, within which that practice finds a particular significance, which means that the very terms which they use to describe the action cannot be separated from their cultural/social and linguistic milieu, and that my 'training' with Kaitaisha is more to do with forming a deep and complex understanding of the concepts they work with, and within the context that they operate in, as opposed to a physical training as such. My understanding of Kaitaisha's training is rooted in complex 'codes' of communication, and my experience goes beyond 'training', and can more closely be defined in terms of a transformation of self. Another complexity I have raised is that although I recognise a highly skilled performer body in many core members, the question of training is a contentious one within Kaitaisha itself, as Shimizu is as interested in working with the 'untrained' body as the 'trained' body, and in using these bodies in the composition to express certain ideas. The signature practice that each Kaitaisha performer tends to work with in detail is implicitly connected to the individual and their physicality, and therefore 'belongs' in a sense to them alone.

My argument is pinned to my understanding of the practice where we operate as part of a network of performers-selves within the collaborative process, in an 'in-between' transcultural place, whereby this 'self' is transformed/formed by the temporal/spatial specificity of the action. I view this space in terms of Bhabha's notion of the 'third space of enunciation', where culture shifts from a particular group, allowing for the invention of a hybrid identity that permits interacting groups to participate in a common identity that forms in a shared space, where we emerge as the others of our selves. My view of the performer identifies them as always already in flux, relationally dynamic, and temporally mapped relative to the 'other' through duration, in Bergson's sense of

the term. I argue that these performers belong to a complex system (in Cillier's terms, 1998), where knowledge is shared and continually unfolds in the performance space. I would argue that collaboration is transformative in this way, for although Kaitaisha have fixed signature practices and they deliberately repeat choreographic sequences in their work, Shimizu auto-critically challenges these practices, particularly through the use of collaboration.

I would argue that Kaitaisha's training is achieved little by little over a lengthy period of time, and includes the inculcation of attitude as well as ethos; it is thus impossible to disseminate in different pedagogic contexts; I carry a trace of such practices, but this trace can only be set in motion within the specific Kaitaisha dynamic, where I am one small part of the whole. My embodied experience of Kaitaisha is subject to reduction and loss, and I carry a fragile trace of that sense of its anticipated loss; attempts to reproduce such a trace might result in a superficial imitation, equal to the experience of mimicry. However, what might happen, and I have experienced this in my practice outside of Kaitaisha, is that with a degree of distance from their practice, I am able to create something new, an assimilation of the practice which forms something else, but which is not defined by, or subordinate to, the original training. This is the 'trace' that Hino carries of Hijikata's practice, that has allowed her to assimilate it into something new: Kaitaisha's practice. Here I am presenting a paradox, where I cannot hold onto such training by directly 'holding onto' or reproducing it, but the only way in which I can gain value from it (and do gain value from it) is by letting it go. It cannot be easily grasped or reduced to a set of propositions – it *emerges*. I would suggest that this emergent new practice is only formed by a distance from the practice, which allows me to appreciate it as a meaningful echo of what it was.

Here I am clearly arguing against a universalist claim of certain practices, as I discussed in relation to Barba in Chapter One. I also propose that something as intangible as this practice, or complex system, cannot be reproduced as a transferable system, subject to scientific or objective scrutiny, and any attempt to do so not only misrepresents it but also occludes it. In this case, I aim not to represent it, but to celebrate its passing, its transience and the new complex systems that emerge from it. Clearly, many training systems and performance practices are complex, formed by context, and constantly change and evolve over time, and it is therefore important to highlight that my research



output in relation to my work with Kaitaisha is less focussed on the ‘non-transferable’ nature of Kaitaisha’s work, and rather more on the impact that my otherness within it translates into the way in which I carry and transmit traces of the practice when I am in different contexts.

### **iii. The addressing of expertise and virtuosity in performer training**

I would argue that in terms of performer training the position for which I have made a case through my research moves away from the framework that theatre, dance, and performance training is located in, where, in my view, training is regarded in terms of something that is relatively fixed<sup>127</sup>. I would also suggest that the academy draws on and teaches primarily pre-existing training approaches as formulated by Constantin Stanislavski, Michael Chekhov, Grotowski, Rudolf Laban, to name but a few, without necessarily acknowledging that they are disseminating hybridised forms. Clearly, such a suggestion is controversial, and members of the academy might respond with the view that the transmission of a pre-existing approach is one stage of a long-term development process for the artist, undertaken over the course of a career, and that the training is more concerned with a discipline, or work ethic, in Grotowski’s terms, as I discuss below.

However, the difficulty still remains that a practitioner might receive such training and regard it as complete, as opposed to merely being one part of a long-term developmental process. Writing on Grotowski in relation to actor training, Lisa Wolford states that although Grotowski acknowledged being inspired by the training methods of certain Asian theatre forms, such as Kathakali, Peking Opera, and Noh Theatre, he ‘... eventually came to the conclusion that Western actors were better served by looking to Asian theatre practices as a model for a rigorous work ethic than by attempting to appropriate codified exercises’ (Wolford, 2010: 208). I would agree that it is such principles and effectively an ethos and a work ethic, that should be drawn on in performer training, as distinct from fixed training methods as such. I would argue that by institutionalising such training approaches and claiming them as fixed forms they

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<sup>127</sup>I attended and delivered a paper entitled ‘Tracing Traces: Locating Training in the In-between Transcultural Performer Self’ at the Performer Training Working Group as part of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) Annual Conference, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012. In my view, the majority of papers delivered as part of this working group focused on performer training in terms of it being something ‘fixed’ and in terms of its dissemination as a fixed form.

become ossified. This observation connects to several new insights that have emerged from my inquiry, concerning both the performer's desire for expertise or virtuosity and how we locate ourselves with regard to 'pastness'.

I want to end with a few further points: firstly, I would argue that through using my self and/or selfhood as a site of enquiry I have discovered *my own* desire for expertise and for the performance mastery associated with virtuosity. I would suggest that this desire relates to the fixed performer training systems that I have been schooled in – hence, for example, the sense that *unless I am like Grotowski I cannot claim value*. I would argue that through investing in a contract of belief in Shimizu as director and Hino as choreographer (as defined by de Certeau, discussed in Chapter Three) I have elevated them to a model of expertise or virtuosity, to which I can only aspire and inevitably fail, as clearly defined achievable methods do not exist. I would suggest, with the benefit of the retrospection I have identified above, that my motivation for placing Shimizu and Hino in this role has something to do with otherness, or a desire for the other. The danger of such a fact is that as performer, within or outside the Kaitaisha context, I work with an unwavering internal dialogue of Shimizu and Hino's critical response to my work, with the consequence that I can only ever fail to effectively meet this demand. What this means, in turn, and I see this as a wider phenomenon in performers with whose work I am familiar, is a restless lack of satisfaction with what has been acquired.

Secondly, and finally, I would suggest that drawing on fixed training methods is part of a wider tendency inherent in human experience of representing and iconicising the past as fixed; indeed, as I have sought to establish in Chapter Five, we are always regarding *ourselves* in retrospect, unavoidably so, in Rosenthal's terms, where we regard ourselves as both subject and object simultaneously and where reflection can only ever yield an object of reflection as the present moment is always already past. Yet the "me" of the past is constantly appearing, disappearing and transforming – there is no linear fixed past "me", the past itself is subject to mutability (Rosenthal, 2000). The self - or selfhood - is therefore a *process* and I would suggest that in these terms, it is problematic to defer to a fixed practice or training system. These practices or systems should instead function, and be regarded, as things that, like the self/selfhood, are subject to continuous change and transformation.

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## APPENDIX

Research Participant Consent Form, Gekidan Kaitaisha (Signed Japanese version).

Research Participant Consent Form, Gekidan Kaitaisha (Unsigned English version).

Performance documentation DVD 1, 'The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution', Canvas Studio, Tokyo (2010), Disc One.

Performance documentation DVD 2, 'The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution', Canvas Studio, Tokyo (2010), Disc Two.

Performance documentation DVD 3, 'Dream Regime: Part One – Faithful Bodies', Morishita Studio, Tokyo (2011).

Performance documentation DVD 4, 'Dream Regime: Part Two – Era of the Sick', Morishita Studio, Tokyo (2011).

Performance documentation DVD 5, '*Jouissance* System', Canvas Studio, Tokyo (2012).

リサーチ参加承諾同意書

リサーチプロジェクトのタイトル:

劇団解体社「With Eternal Revolution」-2010年7月25日〜8月7日 東京都 Free Space Canvasにて行われるパフォーマンスとリハーサルへの参加と観察

リサーチプロジェクトの概要説明:

現在私はロンドンのミドルセックス大学において博士課程に従事しています。私の実践に基づいた研究は、「ヨーロッパ」と「第二次世界大戦後の日本」の演劇にける、美的感覚とパフォーマンスの見方と行い方、および研究方法の共通点と対比の可能性に関係しています。

劇団解体社でのプロジェクトを通して、「アジア」の混合されたパフォーマンス・トレーニングの技術が、どのようにして「ヨーロッパ」のパフォーマーによって翻訳され、教えられ理解され、統合されているかを探索することを目的としています。

リハーサルやグループディスカッション、および発表されるパフォーマンスの録画をいたします。録画されたビデオは私の博士論文にのみ使用されます。また、収集されたデータは極秘（コンフィデンシャル）に扱われ、録画フィルムとともに安全に保管されます。実例としてのイメージと録画ビデオは私の博士論文として発表され、プレゼンテーションやインターネット上オンラインページに使われるかもしれません。

研究調査員の詳細:

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承諾同意書:

私はリサーチプロジェクトに参加することを同意します。しかし、また、いつでも身を引く事ができることを承知しています。私が提供する情報は調査員によって内密に扱われる事を理解しています。

氏名 劇団解体社代表 清水信臣

署名 清水信臣 Shingya Shunjin

日付 2010. 7. 25

追記: このプロジェクトに参加して、何か疑問が生じたり不安を感じたりした時は、調査員に提起して下さい。しかしながら、もし第三者機関にコンタクトをしたい場合は、

Charmain Alleyneを通じてミドルセックス大学教務部長(Director of Studies at Middlesex University)にコンタクトして下さい。

This form has been created as part of an ethical formality and responsibility to you as an individual.  
この承諾書は倫理的形式に基づき作成されており、個人の責任はあなたにあります。

## **Research Participant Consent Form**

### **Title of Research Project:**

Gekidan Kaitaisha 'With Eternal Revolution'; participation in and observation of rehearsals and performances at Free Space Canvas, Tokyo, 25th July - 7th August 2010.

### **Description of Research Project:**

I am currently conducting PhD research at Middlesex University, London. My practice-based research is concerned with exploring a potential overlap between 'European' and 'post-WWII Japanese' aesthetics and ways of seeing, doing and knowing in performance. Through the project with Gekidan Kaitaisha, I aim to explore how hybridised 'Asian' performer-training techniques can be translated, taught, understood, and embodied by the 'European' performer. I intend to film rehearsals, group discussions and the final performances. The video footage will only be used within the context of my PhD. Data will be treated confidentially, and along with the film footage will be stored securely. Example images and video footage may be published in my PhD, used in conference presentations and in online versions of papers.

### **Investigator Contact Details:**

Name: Rebecca Woodford-Smith

Email: rebeccaws80@hotmail.co.uk

School: Middlesex University, School of Arts and Education, Performing Arts

### **University address & contact:**

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Telephone: 020 8411 6349

### **Consent Statement:**

I agree to take part in this research, and I am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Director of Studies at Middlesex University (please contact through

Charmain Alleyne).

This form has been created as part of an ethical formality and responsibility to you as an individual.

**Performance documentation DVD 1 & 2, *The Last Living Trilogy: With Eternal Revolution*, Canvas Studio, Tokyo (2010) Disc One and Two**

**Performance documentation DVD 3 & 4, *Dream Regime: Part One – Faithful Bodies & Part Two – Era of the Sick*, Morishita Studio, Tokyo (2011)**

**Performance documentation DVD 5, ‘*Jouissance* System’, Canvas Studio, Tokyo  
(2012)**